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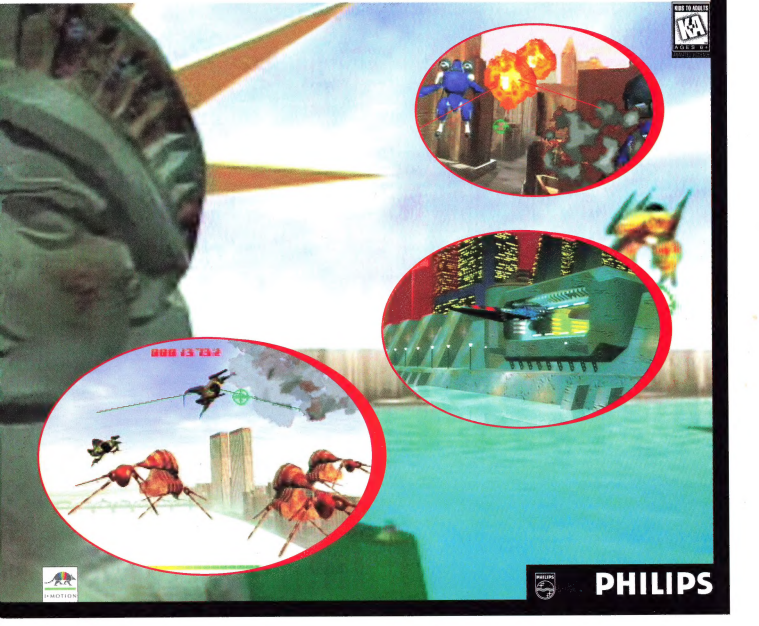

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ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF ORIGIN SYSTEMS

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High-tech comics enliven computer screens, page 52.

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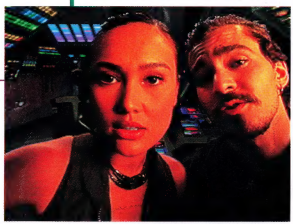

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DOS, Windows, and Macintosh

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Electronic Entertainment®

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6

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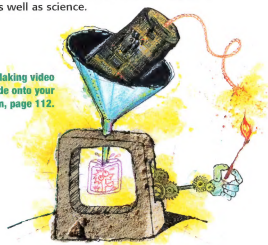

Making video explode onto your screen, page 112.

June 1995

Editor's Page

Fredric Paul

Now or Never

Ever since CD-i, Sega CD, and 3DO hit the market amid explosions of hype, the consumer electronics industry has been waiting for advanced CD-based console game systems to grab the public's imagination.

It hasn't happened. Despite huge investments by Philips, CD-i languished in the U.S. Sega CD never really caught on, either. And the impact of 3DO's press coverage was undermined by high prices, an initial lack of software, and poor distribution. Meanwhile, sales of CD-ROM-equipped multimedia PCs and Macs went through the roof. Millions of Americans now own powerful computers able to deliver much of what those TV-based systems promised—and a lot more besides.

But the rise of the multimedia PC hasn't stopped Sega, Sony, and Nintendo from trying to sell next-generation set-top systems. At the Electronic Entertainment Expo this May in Los Angeles—co-sponsored by E^2's parent company Infotainment World—each of the three companies is showcasing a new system it hopes will succeed where others have failed. And 3DO itself is touting plenty of new software as well as its new M2 system, which is intended to beat the big boys at their own game. (Of course, the massive show also features stacks of new PC titles; see "Now Showing: Electronic Entertainment Expo" on page 46.)

The multibillion-dollar question is, will any or all of these advanced systems be able to woo people who have become used to the somewhat slower graphics performance but far greater variety and sophistication of PC games and multimedia titles?

No one knows yet, but plenty of companies are betting serious money that the CD-based consoles will quickly blow away kid-oriented 16-bit cartridge systems and challenge the PC market as well. At *Electronic Entertainment,* we're not yet convinced, but we're definitely interested.

That's why this month kicks off our new CD Console Games section. A companion to PC Games, the new section will consolidate coverage of the new 32-bit and 64-bit systems and games. And it will cover them from the perspective of adults experienced with Doom and Wing Commander III, not kids weaned on Sonic and Mario.

CD Console Games opens with assistant editor Bill Meyer's in-depth look at how the new machines stack up against the PC ("Gaming's Wave of the Future?" on page 94). Every month, the section will feature both full-length and capsule reviews and news of grown-up games for the new systems.

Of course, CD-based gaming consoles aren't the only entertainment technology struggling to live up to expectations. Interactive TV has been one of the buzzwords of the '90s, but it's still mostly a mirage. And as Keith Ferrell points out in his Tube Man column ("Changing of the Guard," page 42), the PC has once again stepped into the breach. Computer-based online entertainment has become a huge and vibrant consumer market. Because most of our readers won't get to check out ITV for several years or more, Tube Man is about to take an extended vacation. It will return as soon as a significant number of readers can buy ITV for themselves. In the meantime, look for Wirehead—a new online column—to debut next month.

FP

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Electronic Entertainment (ISSN 1074-1356), The No. 1 Interactive Entertainment Magazine, is published monthly for $18.00 per year by Infotainment World, Inc., 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Ste. 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; (415) 349-4300; An IDG Company: The World's Leader In Information Services On Information Technology. The Electronic Entertainment® name and logo are registered trademarks of Infotainment World, Inc. Second class postage paid at San Mateo, CA, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT, P.O. Box 59710, Boulder, CO 80322. Change of Address: Please send old label and new address to ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT, P.O. Box 59710, Boulder, CO 80322. GST 131 304 347. Foreign and Canadian orders must be prepaid in U.S. dollars on a U.S. bank and must include $30/year additional for shipping (air delivery). No part of this publication may be printed or reproduced without written permission from the publisher. *Electronic Entertainment* makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of articles published in the magazine and assumes no responsibility for damages as a result of errors or omissions. PRODUCED IN U.S.A.

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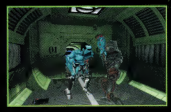

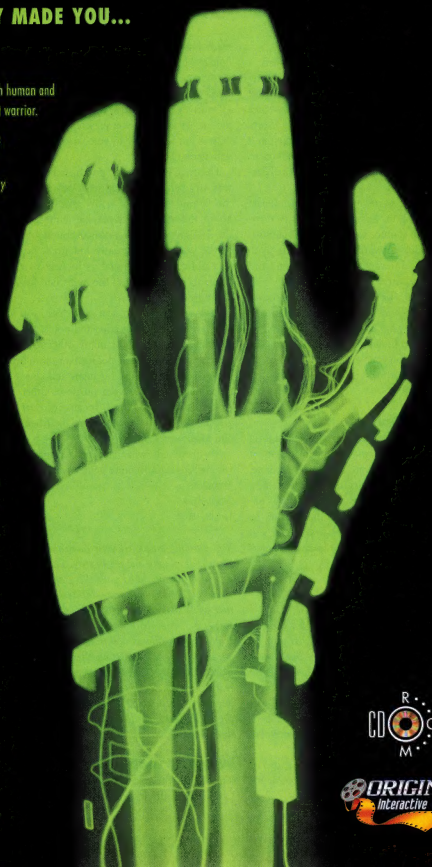

CD ROM

ORIGIN Interactive Movie

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Letters

Happy Customer

Thought you all might like to see this: a happy customer! In this day and age of deteriorating quality and workmanship in most aspects of the consumer market, *Electronic Entertainment* is a much appreciated exception to the rule. Obvious pride is taken in it by its creators and staff. This attention to detail is sorely lacking in many other publications in its class.

I believe it's grossly negligent on my part not to bring my satisfaction to your attention. Each month, with no lack of enthusiasm, I look forward to learning the truth about the interactive entertainment and gaming industry.

Above all, I value *Electronic Entertainment's* straightforward and honest approach to its review and assessment of products. By all means, continue the fine work, and congratulations on your success so far.

Sean Sweeney
St. Charles, MO

A Few Favors

I must say that I love the magazine. *Electronic Entertainment's* judgments about software and hardware are always accurate. Plus, it covers so much ground in every issue.

I was wondering if you could do me a couple of favors? What do you think about the Gravis UltraSound MAX? And, could you send me the fax numbers for LucasArts Entertainment and MicroProse?

Aaron Fedorwick
Moose Jaw, SK

We have not reviewed Advanced Gravis' wavetable sound card, the UltraSound MAX, but we did look at their brand new UltraSound ACE card ("Catch The Wave," May 1995, page 82) which adds wavetable sound to your existing FM-synthesis sound card. At $99, this card provides an inexpensive way to add wavetable sound to your system.

To answer your other question, we are not at liberty to release LucasArts' and MicroProse's fax numbers. Call 800-782-9277 to reach LucasArts and 800-879-7529 to get a hold of MicroProse. —*Ed.*

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL WILEY

3-D Graphics

I'll start by saying I love the magazine and the format in which you present it. But, the reason I'm writing is to voice a complaint with game makers.

The first game I ever purchased that I was 100 percent satisfied with was Eye of the Beholder 3. What really grabbed me about this superb role-playing game was the 3-D graphics. For example, the nooks in the walls were actually indented, not flat and two-dimensional as in Arena or Menzoberranzan. All of the items had full detail front and back.

Also, when you were sent on a quest, you were given a clear objective and pointed in the right direction. Like many other role-playing games, you were not forced to search acres of useless ground for items and clues that finally hinted at your purpose. Other games I found exceptional because of their graphic detail and game play are the Might and Magic series and Myst.

My question is, what happened to intuitive yet challenging adventure games with great graphics?

Jordan Hawk
Toronto, ON

You partially answered your own question. Myst isn't exactly ancient history. I'm sorry you were disappointed with the graphics in Arena and Menzoberranzan, but rest assured that game makers are looking to constantly improve the looks of their titles. Unfortunately, that concentration on appearance can have a debilitating effect on game play. With any luck, developers will soon reach what they consider to be an acceptable amount of sizzle so they can start working on the steak again. And remember, Myst II is due sometime late in 1996. —*Ed.*

Wing III Tech Tip

Thanks for the excellent review of Wing Commander III! I purchased it on release day, and I'm glad to see the media giving it the credit it deserves. But there is one very important technical tip every player should know that wasn't published. Origin recommends setting Buffers=99 in the CONFIG.SYS file on your boot disk (the boot disk is pretty much a requirement) to speed up mission loads.

On my fast 486DX2 system, this tip sped up mission-load times from a frustrating two-plus minutes to a comparatively speedy 45 seconds. It also makes transitions and audio clips much smoother during space flight.

Jim Norbeck
Portland, OR

Online Forums

I first want to say how great of a job you guys are doing. I bet everyone writes and says that, but I mean it (if you haven't guessed it, I'm a genuine "suck up!").

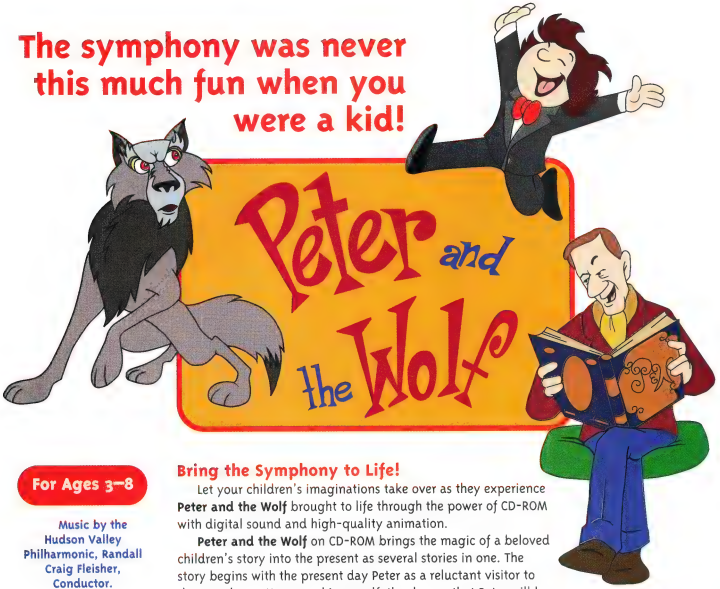
I only wish that the magazine provided a list of fun and useful online forums for its readers.

Zach Klein
Fort Wayne, IN

We are adding more and more online coverage with every issue of Electronic Entertainment. *We think that the commercial online services and the Internet play a big role in electronic entertainment, and we'll be on top of it. Check out our April feature ("Get the 'Net," page 40) on booking in to and using the Internet, which provides a list of popular Usenet newsgroups and World Wide Web sites. Also, look for our monthly Sharp Edge piece, "Cyberslick & Cyberschtick," coming soon.* —*Ed.*

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, *951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; Internet address, e2@iftw.com; MCI ID: 619-7340; and CompuServe: 73361,265.*

The symphony was never this much fun when you were a kid!



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HEAD FOR SATURN

To really understand what life is like on Saturn, look inside your head. There, in the inner realm of rods and cones, of optic nerves and ear drums, is where the Sega Saturn experience breathes. Three 32-bit orchestrated processors. 16.7 million colors, lightning-quick texture mapping, connoisseur-class surround sound, and amazing first-person perspectives immerse you in worlds of entertainment you've never experienced. Sega Saturn is like nothing else on Earth.

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IT'S OUT THERE.

SHARP EDGE

Apple Times Four

If your old double-speed CD-ROM drive can't keep up with your speedy Power Mac, help is on the way. Apple Computer has announced the **AppleCD 600e Quad-Speed CD-ROM Player.** Due out in May, the $350 unit is priced no higher than Apple's current line of double-speed drives, but will deliver twice the performance. Its data transfer rate of 684.4 Kbps, 167.5ms access time, and 256KB of cache memory means faster full-screen, full-motion video. And the multisession 600e will even work with PCs equipped with a SCSI interface. (Apple Computer; 800-538-9696; $349) *—Fredric Paul*

Format: Mac/SCSI **Ship Date:** May

Interactive Media Festival

In the hands of an artist, multimedia can be a lot more than a bunch of CD-ROM encyclopedias. The second annual Interactive Media Festival, June 4-8 at the Variety Arts Center in Los Angeles, showcases interactive compositions in a variety of media, from commercial games and CD-ROM titles to big-name interactive performances and multimedia art installations (for more information on the first IMF, see "The Art of Multimedia," May 1994, page 69).

Ride a virtual surfboard powered by high-speed motors and a Silicon Graphics Onyx RE2 Plus workstation in *Virtual Motion/Cyber Surfin'*.

Look through the 'scope of the multimedia M-16 in Lynn Hershman's America's Finest to see your own image projected into your target, along with random scenes of the horrors of war.

Works to be shown at the 1995 Festival's Arc Gallery (backed once again with big bucks from Motorola) include Denne Development's visceral and fun **Virtual Motion/Cyber Surfin'** virtual surfboard, Lynn Hershman's disturbing antiwar entry **America's Finest,** and Ken Feingold's whimsical take on interpersonal communications called **where I can see my house from here so we are.** A 15-member international jury will select the winners.

If you can't make it to the show, check out the IMF online via the Internet's World Wide Web (http://www.arc.org). (Interactive Media Festival; 800-537-1212)

–Fredric Paul

Ken Feingold's robot puppets use video-camera eyes, microphone ears, and Internet remote control to create a new means of communication in *where I can see my house from here so we are.*

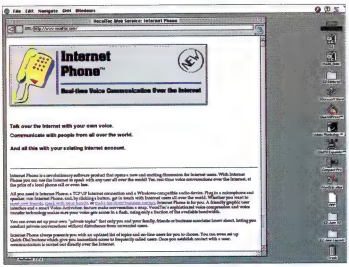
What's on Tap

If your beer vocabulary's been limited to Budweiser, Miller, and Coors, take heed: There's a lot more out there in the way of suds. Capitalizing on America's microbrew-mania, noted beer authority Michael Jackson teamed up with the Discovery Channel to produce **The Beer Hunter,** a CD-ROM based on the six-part television series of the same name that aired on the Discovery Channel last year.

Take a swig of The Beer Hunter.

Jackson, an Englishman, highlights his top 25 American picks, while the title also serves up virtual sips of more than 500 other American brews. Search for your favorite concoctions by region, style, or physical characteristics. (Discovery Channel Multimedia; 800-762-2189; $49.95) *–Donald St. John*

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Ship date: June 1995


Internet Phone
Real-time Voice Communication Over the Internet
Talk over the Internet with your own voice.
Communicate with people from all over the world.
And all this with your existing Internet account.

Internet Phone gives you long distance for the price of a local call.

Dr. Watson, Come Here At Once

So, you're stuck with just one phone line—and you can't decide whether you want to surf or yack. Don't fret: You can do both by setting up an Internet phone connection.

VocalTec's **Internet Phone** for Windows and Electric Magic's **NetPhone** for the Mac let you use your existing Internet account for limited voice communication. If you—and the person you're talking to—have the right equipment and software, you can enjoy an overseas chat for the price of a local phone call.

To use Internet Phone, you'll need at least a 486SX/25 with 8MB of memory, a TCP/IP connection at 14.4 Kbps or faster, and a Winsock driver—not to mention a Windows-compatible sound card, a microphone, and speakers. VocalTec has also set up its own Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channel for Internet Phone users. Conversation is half-duplex, meaning you can't talk and listen at the same time. But you can carry out other types of Internet tasks while you talk, like FTPing files—though slower than normal. Check out the demo, which permits 60-second calls (downloadable from http://www.vocaltec.com/gti.html). The full software will also come bundled with Motorola's Power Class modems. (VocalTec; 800-843-2289; $49)

Electric Magic's NetPhone allows Mac-to-Mac, full-duplex discussions. You need a 68020 Mac, 4MB of RAM, System 7, a MacTCP connection at 14.4 Kbps or faster, and a microphone. The connection requires you to know your IP address or host name (which you can find in "About NetPhone" under the Apple menu) and get the same info from the person you're calling. Instead of using your system's speakers, Electric Magic recommends headphones. Check out http://www.emagic.com for a 45-second demo version. (Electric Magic; 800-987-2001; $55 single copy, $85 double-pack) —*Donald St. John*

Internet Phone
Platform: Windows
Available: Now

NetPhone
Platform: Mac
Available: Now

If It Ain't a Hit, It Ain't Nothin'

Estimated total game sales garnered by the top 10 CD-ROM games last Christmas: 35%

Number of titles on the market that sold only one copy each last December: 90

Of the 2,000-plus multimedia titles on the market, percentage that sold 10 or fewer copies last December: 20%

CD-ROM developers making money on their CD-ROM products: 4%

Sources: Robertson Stephens, 1994; PC Data, 1995; and Gistics, 1994

Tanzanian Adventure

Are budget and time constraints keeping you from your dream getaway? Let your computer take you there instead. Sumeria's upcoming **Wild Africa: Ngorongoro, Serengeti, Tarangirle** uses original photographs and video to create a unique escape that's the next best thing to being on safari.

Wild Africa visits three of Tanzania's national parks, home to more than 90 exotic animals. Take a photo tour through the

Wild Africa
Visual Tour
This photo essay details the splendor and drama of the African plains.
Locations
Explore three of Tanzania's wildlife parks through maps, photos, and movies.
Field Guide
Instant access to information about the plants, birds, and animals of East Africa.

Where the wild things are...

parks, exploring the areas and animals that pique your interest. Check out the park maps, scenic photos, and videos, or consult the field guide to learn more about the flora and fauna. (Sumeria; 800-478-6374; $49.95 each) —*Christine Grech*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: Now

NEWSFLASH

■ It was only a matter of time before the two aging boy geniuses would offer to shack up and share their expensive toys. In the ultimate combination of computer technology and Hollywood storytelling, **Bill Gates** brings the vast resources of Microsoft to the marriage, while **Steven Spielberg** shows up with an incredible string of movie mega-successes, not to mention his DreamWorks SKG studio partners–entertainment moguls Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen. All together, the fearsome foursome is **DreamWorks Interactive,** backed with $15 million each from Microsoft and DreamWorks.

This union–crackling with creative and financial synergy–has the potential to create some great games and titles. Just as important, Microsoft has the technology and the resources to attend to every detail. And all the big names mean no problem grabbing shelf space. The only hangup is that neither Microsoft nor Spielberg are known for working quickly: This marriage won't bear fruit until at least the 1996 holiday season.

■ Interactive TV will invade hotels all across America this summer, thanks to **Fourth Network.** The company plans to wire 50,000 hotel rooms by summer's end and 200,000 by next spring with access services that include **restaurant reservations, theater ticketing,** and **in-room shopping.** Fourth Network aims to make selecting live entertainment, goods, and services as easy as clicking the remote control. The company will partner with Guest Informant, a California publisher that produces in-room, ad-driven visitor guides. (Fourth Network; 800-396-3322)

■ Kawai has a new **digital**

continued on page 16

StarTalk with James Tolkan

James Tolkan, a 30-year acting veteran who co-starred in Top Gun *as Commander Hondo—along with Tom Cruise and plenty of jet fuel—recreates his role in Spectrum HoloByte's upcoming CD-ROM game.* Electronic Entertainment*'s Bill Meyer caught up with the affable Tolkan just after he'd wrapped his work on the title.*

***Electronic Entertainment:* Would you describe Top Gun as an interactive movie or a flight sim?**

James Tolkan: A movie. The player sees different scenes depending on his decisions. He takes on the role that Tom Cruise played in the movie. My task, as the squadron commander, is to train the pilot, put him in the airplane, and then assess how well he does.

James Tolkan once again rules the skies in his role as Commander Hondo from the 1986 movie *Top Gun.*

E^2: Is there anything about this game that makes it different?

JT: To tell you the truth, I've never played one of these games. I don't even have a computer.

E^2: What was different about acting in a CD-ROM?

JT: Doing the CD was a lot more difficult. In a film, you might work on two or two and a half pages [of the script] a day. We did 12 to 14 pages a day on this project and finished the whole thing in seven days—all working against a blue screen.

E^2: What was it like to have to film multiple versions of scenes?

JT: From an acting standpoint, it was rather tricky. You would play a scene and then have to go back and do it again—only with a different slant. It's something that's new to me. But you just dive in and do it.

E^2: Would you do another interactive project?

JT: I don't know. There's already talk about doing some more of these. After all, there were four *Star Wars* titles. It depends on how well this one does.

Coffee 'n' Computers

Enjoy candlelit computing and tasty treats at the Cybersmith digital cafe.

The latest digital cafe has opened its doors in Cambridge, Mass., across the street from Harvard University.

Cybersmith lets students, hackers, and just plain Joes cozy up to 30 Macs and 20 PCs that are either connected to online services and the Internet or running more than 90 multimedia titles and games for both kids and adults. There are even a couple of photo-morphing and virtual-reality stations. Driven by the motto "Building Community With Technology," Cybersmith is staffed by 20 "technosmiths," trained to solve problems and answer questions.

If you get hungry while at the keyboard, you can order gourmet coffee and savory treats electronically from Smitty's On-Line Cafe. Open late into the evening, this combination computer center, cafe, book, and software store is already becoming a popular hangout in eclectic Harvard Square.

Cybersmith makes it easy to try a disc before you buy. You can apply credit for the first 20 minutes you spend exploring a title (about $3.50) toward the purchase. (Cybersmith, 36 Church St., Cambridge, MA, 617-492-5857; $1 for a six-month membership plus 17.5 cents/minute online; VR stations, $5 for five minutes) *–Fredric Paul*

Fear is all in your head.

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NEWSFLASH

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piano, the CA840, that's both piano and teacher. The keyboard's built-in Concert Magic software lets you play any of the 88 increasingly difficult musical pieces assigned to each of the piano's keys with the touch of a finger. You can hear how they should be played, then practice, practice, practice until you can wow your friends at parties by playing like a pro. The piano is fully MIDI-compatible and lets you record as many as five songs. The CA840 has weighted wooden keys, the tonal quality of an acoustic instrument, and never needs tuning. (Kawai; 310-631-1771; street price $4,200-$4,500)

■ Capitalizing on growing Internet-mania, Columbia Pictures is working on **The Net,** a full-length techno-thriller starring **Sandra Bullock** (you've seen her in *Speed* and *Demolition Man*) as Angela, a reclusive software tester who's checking a program designed to locate music sites on the Internet. She soon discovers that the program can also access certain other locations, such as the Federal Reserve, the New York Stock Exchange, and the IRS. A pack of dangerous types finds out and attempts to steal the program—altering history and Angela's identity in the process (it's a movie, OK?). Angela's former shrink, comic **Dennis Miller,** enters the action to help foil the evil plan while trying to avoid becoming a Net casualty. Look for it this fall.

■ If you like your clothes to make a statement, check out the new line of 100% cotton shirts and hats from **Netwe@r.** The garb features big, bold black-on-white **emoticons,** those cloyingly clever little symbols you often find decorating e-mail and online mes-

continued on page 18

Online Vows

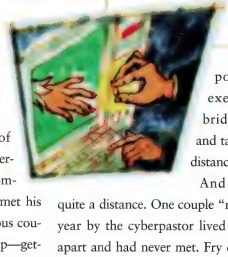


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUKSAN

Online romance—the process of meeting or falling in love in cyberspace—is becoming pretty common. Heck, even Rush Limbaugh met his mate that way. But a few adventurous couples are taking the next logical step—getting hitched online.

Members of the **ImagiNation Network** (INN) have already "attended" such events. Several online commitment ceremonies took place in the past year. But while these exchanges of vows may be just as sweet as real-life weddings, they aren't legal unions. (For a lowdown on a "real" virtual-reality wedding, see "Love at First Byte," December 1994, page 72.)

Legal limitations don't seem to matter to the cybernewlyweds. "No matter how well you know someone online, there's that cyberdistance between you," explains Dr. Richard Fry, who's presided over three ImagiNation weddings. According to Fry, a nondenominational pastor from San Diego who's known as HOSTRex online, "the point of the exercise is to bridge that gap and take away the distance."

And it can be quite a distance. One couple "married" last year by the cyberpastor lived 1,500 miles apart and had never met. Fry doesn't see a problem with couples stepping up to the altar online, even if the relationship is limited to the confines of cyberspace. His only requirement for performing the virtual nuptials: Neither of the parties can be married to someone else in physical space. Fry frowns on even electronic polygamy.

Sometimes, though, cyberweddings turn real. Brenda K. from Decatur, Ill. and Harry S. from Detroit—known as Mr. and Mrs. Happy online—were each going through nasty divorces when they first met online in July 1993. They first set eyes on each other five months later, and Brenda moved in with Harry in March 1994. Reverend Fry will marry them in person at the National INN conference this July in Las Vegas.

—Christine Grech

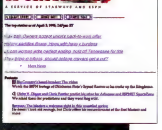
All Sports, All the Time

Don't you just hate the fact that sleep, your job, and the great outdoors interfere with seeing your favorite sports on TV? That's why ESPN, *the* name in TV sports, is launching a World Wide Web site, ESPNET SportsZone. Now you can get up-to-the-minute updates, even when you're not in front of the tube.

The Web page, co-sponsored with Starwave (Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's aggressive new company), will tap the wealth of scores and statistics, the unique charm of the ESPN on-air personalities, and all the other elements needed to satisfy your sports jones. Chat and polling areas, special columns, and even multimedia player "cards" are in the works.

For now, the page concentrates on summer sports, but ESPN plans to add coverage of other sports—including second-tier activities like lacrosse and polo—as the seasons change. And the network will continue posting to Prodigy.

Starwave's other activities include an entertainment Web page called Mr. Showbiz—an online Hollywood gossip sheet—and CD-ROM deals with Clint Eastwood, Peter Gabriel, Sting, and Jim Henson Productions. *–Donald St. John*



Cable's premier sports network moves onto the World Wide Web at http://ESPNET.SportsZone.com.

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■ **FOR UP TO 8 PLAYERS ON LAN!** You can play solo against intelligent computer-controlled drivers. Or against a friend using the simultaneous 2-player split screen. Best of all, get on an IPX-protocol LAN for the ultimate race — with up to 8 players at the same time*!

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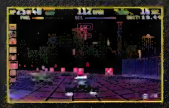
*CD version only.



NEWSFLASH

from page 16

sages to help communicate the writer's feelings. The current line includes such standards as a happy face :) , a Bronx cheer :-p , a smooch : *, a rose @)—, and a host of others. They may be just what you need make your wardrobe go =:o. (Netwe@r; 800-906-9327; hats $17, shirts $16, sweatshirts $37)

- Multimedia is truly an international phenomenon. IDG Hungary, a division of the same company that owns E^2, puts out **abcd Interactive Digizine,** a funky, artsy digital publication that rivals any of its American competition (from Medio Magazine to substance.digizine) except that it's done in Hungarian. But the year-end issues, like the disc we looked at, **The Best of the First Year (1994),** are also published in English.

  This one featured 1994's annual round-up disc, an interactive MIDI keyboard that you play with your mouse, a virtual retro-'60s rave complete with interactive light show, and myriad arcade games, all for less than $10. (IDG Hungary; Write to: abcd, Istvan Biro IDG Magyarorszagi Lapkiado Kft, Marvany u. 1. 1126, Budapest, Hungary; $9.95)

- This is not your father's Macintosh: Apple recently gave a sneak peek at a prototype for a new small-footprint Power Mac design. The new line, dubbed **Pomona,** is an all-in-one flat machine that sits at a tilt on a bookrest-like stand. A flat-panel display is on the top half, while a flip-out quad-speed CD-ROM player commands the bottom half; a small keyboard with trackpad slides underneath. Apple says the machine will use a PowerPC 603 Plus chip running at more than 100MHz and will feature a built-in TV receiver and speakers. (Apple Computer; 800-538-9696; not yet priced)

Hey Batter . . . Swing!

The PC version of the Batter Up will look only slightly different than its Sega Genesis sibling, shown here. It'll plug into your joystick port for simulated batting action.

Do you imagine yourself swinging in the big leagues, except that you haven't had time to perfect your game? Then keep your eye on **Batter Up.** Sports Sciences will soon introduce a PC version of its clever virtual swinger—previously for video games—that will let you practice at home without smashing a lamp.

Batter Up includes a special full-size, soft-foam bat embedded with a motion sensor. Since it substitutes for a joystick, Batter Up will operate with any Windows program that's joystick-enabled. Sports Sciences will initially bundle Accolade's Hardball 4 with the bat, but may switch to Microsoft Baseball when that game ships later this summer.

The software simulates the wind-up and delivery; you just swing. Your monitor shows an approximation of where the ball would have gone if you were really hitting. Of course, without the feeling of connecting—the craaaCK!—Batter Up will never quite replace the real thing. (Sports Sciences; 800-860-4727; $69)

—Ann M. Marcus

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

Platform: PC
Shipdate: Late spring/early summer

What's Missing?

CD-ROM sales are growing at a phenomenal rate, but a number of factors conspire to keep computer entertainment from becoming a true mass market phenomenon.

According to Michael Moon, a principal at market researcher Gistics Inc. in Larkspur, Calif., consumers need five types of support before they will fully embrace CD-ROMs:

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LOJAN

First, they need a way to experience interactive products before they buy. The music industry has radio, concerts, and—of course—MTV, which give customers a chance to sample the wares, but few such opportunities exist for the CD-ROM shopper.

Second, CD-ROMs need to develop brand recognition. Movies have their stars, McDonald's has the arches. Brand recognition helps assure the buyer of the type of quality they can expect. But CD-ROMs are only now starting to carry recognizable identification.

Third, titles should reflect consumer demand. Developers can't simply market products they themselves think are cool; feedback is key. While critics decry the commercialized nature of the movie studio and the record label, these institutions do a good job of catering to what the market wants.

Fourth, distributors must get into the funding process, backing titles that they're confident will sell. Most of today's CD-ROM development is funded with money from outside the industry, by financiers with no clear sense of what will actually sell.

And fifth, the business model for providing shelf space in stores needs an overhaul. A large record store stocks 15,000 to 30,000 CDs and tapes. A typical computer store carries only 600 CD-ROMs. And computer stores are focused on selling big-ticket items, not relatively low-priced entertainment products.

When will these problems be addressed? According to Moon, "Not never, but not soon." At the very least, turning CD-ROMs into a mass-market product will require establishing a robust rental business first, and a way to demonstrate titles online via super high-speed modems or interactive TV.

–Fredric Paul

6:02 AM – WOKE UP IN DUMPSTER.

7:03 AM – HAD TEQUILA WITH CORN FLAKES.

9:31 AM – PUNCHED OUT THE BARTENDER.

12:02 PM – CALLED MOM.

6:31 PM – KICKED THE CRAP OUT OF 18 BIKERS.

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You're Ben. You're on the road. You're indestructible.
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Like fighting ugly gangs with futuristic bikes and Neolithic weapons.
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LUCAS Arts

Leader Board

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software

The X-Wing Collector's CD moves into fourth place on the PC Games chart.

Marathon blasts its way into the No. 2 spot on the Mac Games list.

One Stop CD Shop featuring a variety of applications, games, and multimedia titles debuts at No. 8 on the CD-ROM list.

The Leader Board is a compilation of the top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for January 1995. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.

PC GAMES

1. **Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom has more than 30 levels of mayhem, seven new hellish creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, street price $40-$50)
2. **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game near the top of the Leader Board. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD, $55)
3. **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DOS/Windows, $54.95)
4. **X-Wing Collector's CD** Fly six new X-Wing, A-Wing, and B-Wing missions with enhanced flight and ship graphics and new mission briefings. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, $59.95)
5. **The Best Of Microsoft Entertainment Pack** The 13 best games from Microsoft's four Entertainment Packs, including Tetris, Pipe Dream, and Doctor Blackjack. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Windows, $24.95)
6. **Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger** Veteran Colonel Christopher Blair, played by Mark Hamill, battles the catlike Kilrathi. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, street price $60-$90)
7. **Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0** Upgraded graphics and new features keep this hugely popular flight sim soaring high. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, $49.95)
8. **5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume Two** The second in this series of bargain-priced CD compilations includes Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and the Home Medical Advisor. (Sirius Publishing; 800-247-0307; DOS CD/Win CD, $29.95)
9. **Aladdin Activity Center** A collection of games, puzzles, and art activities based on Disney's animated film *Aladdin*. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD/Mac CD, street price $30)
10. **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just refuses to go away in this haunting puzzler. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, street price $55-$65)

MAC GAMES

1. **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game at the top of the Mac Games list. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, $55)
2. **Marathon** The first high-quality Doom-like game for the Mac. The space station Marathon has been invaded by murdeous aliens; eliminate them and save your comrades. (Bungie; 312-563-6200; Mac, $39-$45)
3. **Wolfenstein-3D** An improved version of Apogee and id's groundbreaking precursor to Doom, featuring better graphics, more mazes, and new weapons, including a flamethrower. (Interplay; 800-969-4263; Mac $39.95)
4. **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban simulation. It's been on the Mac list for more than a year. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, $54.95)
5. **Chessmaster 3000** Play the age-old strategy game with advice from grandmaster Anatoly Karpov. (Mindscape; 800-234-3088; Mac, $59.95)

CD-ROM TITLES

1. **Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom has more than 30 levels of mayhem, seven new hellish creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, street price $40-$50)
2. **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this adventure game near the top of the CD-ROM list. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, $55)
3. **Quicken CD-ROM Deluxe** The popular home finance program for managing your money moves to CD-ROM. (Intuit; 800-624-9060; Win CD, $49.95)
4. **Disney's Animated StoryBook: The Lion King** Let your kids revisit Simba the lion and his friends in this interactive storybook based on Disney's animated hit. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD, $30)
5. **The Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble** Five easy-to-use desktop publishing applications bundled on one disc. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, $80)
6. **X-Wing Collector's CD** Fly six new X-Wing, A-Wing, and B-Wing missions with enhanced flight and ship graphics and new mission briefings. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, $59.95)
7. **Microsoft Encarta** Experience the world through videos, audio clips, animation, and text in this high-tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $99.95)
8. **One Stop CD Shop** This CD compilation includes ten discs across a variety of categories: lifestyle, productivity, entertainment, and reference. You'll find Time Almanac 1990's, Key Gourmet, Slob Zone 3D, and Sports Image World Cup '94. (Softkey; 800-227-5609; Win CD, $29.95)
9. **Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger** Veteran Colonel Christopher Blair, played by *Star Wars*' Mark Hamill, does battle with the catlike Kilrathi once again. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, street price $60-$90)
10. **Aladdin Activity Center** A collection of games, puzzles, and art activities based on Disney's animated film *Aladdin*. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD/Mac CD, street price $30)

With the right game,
it's fifty times faster
than any kid's system.

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2 PLAYER

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Break into a new dimension. Attack, ultimate—even fuel your aggression towards the camera.

Hear that giant sucking sound? Little brothers everywhere are kissing up to play FX Fighter, the most advanced fighting game ever created for the PC. But before you slam the door on the little Desperado, tell him what he's missing:

•Arcade Action & Incredible Speed. FX Fighter was specifically designed to take advantage of your new Pentium, but it still screams on a 486, too.

•Real-Time 3D. FX Fighter is first to use BRender™ technology, the most advanced 3D rendering system ever developed.

•Real Motion Capture. We recorded over 350 actual sequences from martial artists and acrobats for this game. Roundhouse kicks have never been so smooth.

•Flying Camera. Forget side-only views. We've got every angle covered—in three dimensions.

•More Moves. Choose among eight characters, with over 40 attack moves each—including incredible combinations.

•1.0 Points. For about the cost of a two-bit game cart you'll get a superior game with fifty times the speed, four times the color, and twice the resolution. Very smart.

•Confidence. To get previews, more information or order, call 1-800-GTE-TODAY. Or access our web page at http://www.im.gte.com.

PC Gamer magazine described FX Fighter as "ground-breaking." And we're grateful. But to be honest, with all that power sitting on the desktop, we just felt that the last thing the world needed was another damn word-processor.

•Flying 3D Camera. Not just a highlight film, the point-of-view changes as you attack.

GET IT OR DIE TRYING. For 486/Pentium PCs with CD-ROMs.

ARGONAUT SOFTWARE

GTE Entertainment

Spotlight

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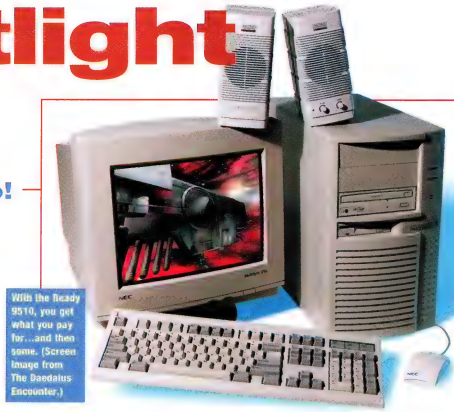


With the Ready 9510, you get what you pay for...and then some. (Screen image from The Daedalus Encounter.)

If you don't mind spending extra money to get extra performance, NEC has a computer for you. The company's Ready Series of home multimedia computers combines the hottest processors with a host of high-end components to create slick systems that won't flinch no matter what the task.

Our test system, a **Ready 9510,** included a 90MHz Pentium CPU, 16MB of RAM, a 1.2GB hard drive, a 64-bit PCI local-bus video card with 1MB of Video DRAM, a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, a Sound Blaster-compatible 16-bit sound card, a 14.4Kbps fax/modem/voice mail card, and sonically acceptable Altec Lansing speakers. You get all that plus a three-year warranty, one year of on-site service, and toll-free technical support. You'll also get a software bundle that includes Microsoft's Bob "social interface" for Windows, Microsoft Encarta, Microsoft Works, Intuit's Quicken, Living Books' Arthur's Birthday Party, and more. To help you get online quickly, there's software for America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe, and The ImagiNation Network, as well as NetCom's NetCruiser for the Internet. Even better, everything is already loaded and ready to roll.

It all adds up to a formidable computer—at a formidable price. The Ready 9510 lists for an imposing $2,699, and that doesn't include a monitor. A high-quality big-screen tube that will do this system justice will set you back at least another $500.

Of course, your investment will get you a computer that's primed to run all of today's multimedia titles and games as well as anything likely to come down the pike in the next 18 months. In our tests, even the power-mad U.S. Navy Fighters ran impressively well at its highest detail and resolution settings.

The machine falters in only a couple of areas. The User's Guide lacks a Quick Start section, instead referring you to other parts of the manual for information on setting up the system. Also, although the computer has an attractive minitower design, the plastic lip that juts out between the CD-ROM and 3.5-inch diskette drives—to continue the case's rounded look—blocks the view of the diskette drive when the unit is on the floor.

But these are minor quibbles. If you can afford it, the 9510 will speed you through your games and multimedia titles and make you the envy of your power-user friends. (NEC Technologies; 800-632-4636; $2,699 without monitor)

–Christopher Lindquist

PHOTOGRAPH BY WERNERS & CLARK

Format: PC
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Social Mixer

Admit it: You have musical aspirations. Your shower version of "Achy Breaky Heart" puts old Billy Ray Cyrus to shame. Well, here's your chance to come out of the shower and make your debut. All you need is **Record Producer,** a new Windows CD-ROM from Intersound Productions, and a microphone for your PC. Then roll "tape" and wail.

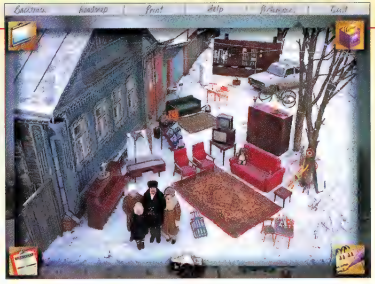
Record Producer has a neat little console that allows you to do some radical mixing. You can take out the drums or switch the guitar to a glockenspiel. Pan from right to left and back again. Add a disco beat with opera instrumentation. In fact, you can mix up to seven tracks of "Achy" or any of the six other songs that come with the package, including "Wooly Bully" and "Midnight Train To Georgia." Unfortunately, these aren't the studio originals, but low-tech versions with "overdrive" guitar riffs that sound more like an engine without oil. (Intersound; 800-945-3059; street price $49.95)

–Donald St. John

Ah, bring up the drums just a bit and pan the oboe...

Format: Win CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★

Living In The Material World



Russia's Kapralov family in their Material World.

It was a 1992 National Public Radio program about the marketing of "Material Girl" Madonna that compelled photographer Peter Menzel to produce his epic CD-ROM **Material World: A Global Family Portrait** for StarPress.

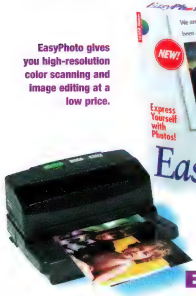
Menzel intends his interactive documentary of 30 families in 30 countries to be "a reality check" on world-wide materialism. With the help of 15 other photographers and videographers, Menzel recorded the daily activities, traditions, and possessions of each family. After spending a week with each "statistically average" family, the photographer asked them to bring all of their belongings outside to be photographed. Each family also completed a questionnaire about their habits, customs, and preferences.

Material World lets you explore the title by country, family, or lifestyle. You can even fill out the questionnaire yourself to see how you measure up. Best of all, you'll find more than 1,400 wildly colorful, engaging photographs—compared to just 350 in the companion coffee-table book. The disc also includes 10 minutes of video footage of family activities, a database containing the 1,500 answers to Menzel's questionnaire, music, and narration by *On The Road* journalist Charles Kuralt.

Unfortunately, you can't search across questionnaires for the answers to a single question, although you can select search terms from a list in the Family Albums section to compare photos of each family's version of various items, such as toilets, television sets, or breakfast foods.

Menzel plans to follow up with a project on the roles of women in each of the 30 countries. He is also working on a title chronicling insect-eating around the world…yum. (StarPress; 800-782-7944; $39.95) *–Ann M. Marcus*

Format: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★



EasyPhoto gives you high-resolution color scanning and image editing at a low price.

EasyPhoto Does It

If you've ever wanted to customize a newsletter, an invitation, or any other digital document with your digitized color snapshots, Storm Software's **EasyPhoto** scanner gives you terrific results for less than $250.

The package includes the EasyPhoto image-editing software on Windows CD-ROM and the EasyPhoto Reader—a nifty little desktop scanner that occupies about as much space on your desk as a large coffee mug. Hook the Reader into your computer's serial port and scan photos up to 4 inches wide. Storm even promotes crisper, cleaner scans by throwing in a fun little air blower that gently removes dust from photos and the scanner itself.

Scanning is as easy as pushing the photo into the Reader's front slot and pressing the green Start button. At 133 pixels per inch, you'll get a high-quality scan in just a few seconds. And the completed file is compressed to about 100K. The EasyPhoto software lets you manipulate the images with its built-in tools or organize them into galleries accessible by most Windows word and image-processing programs. You can even download images from a digital camera with EasyPhoto.

If you've been looking for a way to digitize your prized photos without spending a lot of money, EasyPhoto is a great solution. (Storm Software; 800-787-2983; EasyPhoto Reader and software, $249; software only, $49) *–Joy J. Ma*

Format: DOS and Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Formats and what they mean

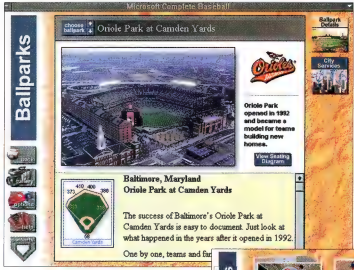
- **Windows** Windows floppy disk
- **DOS** DOS floppy disk
- **Mac** Macintosh floppy disk
- **Windows/DOS** Hybrid Windows/DOS floppy
- **Win CD** Windows CD-ROM
- **DOS CD** DOS CD-ROM
- **Win CD/Mac CD** Separate Windows and Mac CD-ROMs
- **Win/Mac CD** Hybrid Windows/Mac CD-ROM
- **PC** Intel-system compatible
- **Macintosh** Macintosh system compatible

PHOTOGRAPH BY WERNER & CLARK

Spotlight

DIAMOND JUBILEE

The Only Game In Town?


Microsoft Complete Baseball
Ballparks
choose ballpark
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
Baltimore, Maryland
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
The success of Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards is easy to document. Just look at what happened in the years after it opened in 1992.
Orioles
Oriole Park opened in 1992 and became a model for teams building new homes.
View Seating Diagram
Contents
ALMANAC
PLAYERS
RECORDS
BALLPARKS
TEAMS
CHRONICLES

Camden Yards—a jewel among major league stadiums.

The Ballparks section is new to the Microsoft Complete Baseball Guide.

Microsoft has just given frustrated fans its popular **Complete Baseball Guide** CD-ROM compendium of America's national pastime.

You still get stats on every Major Leaguer who ever swung a bat (see September 1994, page 24). But this year's disc triples the video clips and doubles the sound bites. You also get a new section highlighting contemporary and vintage ballparks and a Gallery button that will take you right to the multimedia action.

The Guide's innovative online component, the Microsoft Baseball Daily, now gives you access to more extensive recaps of the previous day's action, along with previews, minor-league data, and insider updates. And you can download the goods in both graphical and ASCII format for importing it into other programs. Best of all, the news is *not* all about replacement players. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; $49.95)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Creepshow

You *don't* want to get stuck in one of H.R. Giger's bizarre dreams. But you can keep these twisted visions close at hand with the **H.R. Giger Screen Saver** from Cyberdreams. The Swiss surrealist is probably best known for the Academy-Award-winning monster he created for the movie *Alien;* his sickly skeletal images also graced the cover of the Dead Kennedys' album *Frankenchrist.*

Just another happy day in Gigerworld.

The screen saver features 10 haunting modules. The Beast serves up images of tortured souls sliding down the walls and then screeching off into thin air. Bombs springs laughing skulls up and down bony poles like phantasms rising from the grave. Illuminatus I sets a pair of dark angels to the task of creating intricately latticed Gothic wallpaper; these same angels return in the demented Notes module, which features floating message boards that carry the text you enter—and a haunting klezmer-like melody playing in the background.

The program also includes a new short story from science-fiction powerhouse Harlan Ellison, "The Dreams a Nightmare Dreams," which explains, sort of, how all these characters got where they are. Giger's imagery is a lot more disturbing than flying toasters, but it's also more memorable. (Cyberdreams; 818-223-9990; $29.95)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Windows, Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Bass Player

Yamaha's YST-SS510 speaker system has a strong low-end—at a high price.

Just a few years ago, a pair of boxy 4-inch speakers attached to your computer seemed cutting-edge. These days, you need a full-bore sound system with a subwoofer to take full advantage of multimedia.

A new contender for your listening dollar is the **Yamaha YST-SS510.** The three-piece powered system includes a pair of 3-watt satellite speakers and a hefty 25-watt subwoofer, and it comes in your choice of black or white. The slim satellites take up little desktop space, while the floor-mounted subwoofer could double as a serious doorstop.

On the sound side, the Yamaha system serves up some respectable bass. Shooter games like Doom and Heretic sound great—crisp yet resonant. But music comes out a little muddy compared to our Editors' Choice selection from Cambridge SoundWorks. And although Yamaha boasts convenient controls and a handy auto on-off feature that the SoundWork speakers lack, the Yamahas cost $100 more. (Yamaha; 800-492-6242; $299)

—Christine Grech

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAELS & CLARK

Platform: PC, Macintosh
Rating: ★ ★ ★

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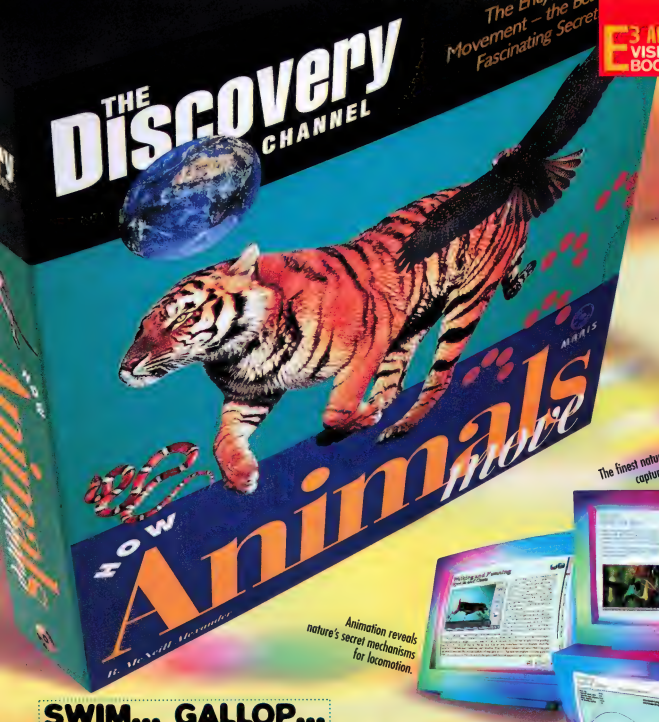
THE Discovery CHANNEL

The Engineering of Movement – the Biology of Fascinating Secrets



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Dozens of computer animations reveal the secrets of animal locomotion. Learn to identify and recognize animals by their distinctive tracks. Create your own animal—and see how it moves.

For more information on this and other Discovery CD-ROM products, call 1-800-762-2181 or your local software dealer.

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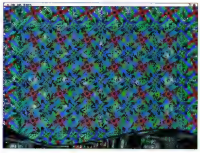
MARIS

THE Discovery CHANNEL CD-ROM™

Spotlight

LIGHT SHOW

Feeling Groovy



A crazy quilt of colors and shapes that undulate to music.

Make your monitor explode with crazy colors gyrating on a bed of freeform shapes that dance to the beat of the music. Big Top's **The Groove Thing** gives new meaning to the word kaleidoscope. It offers interactivity for its own sake—the only limitation is your imagination. You can control the patterns and choose from a generous color palette. It can either use the built-in rhythms or pipe in your own music. The Groove Thing brings the visual wildness of psychedelics to the safety of your desktop. Enjoy the ride. (Big Top Productions; 800-900-7529; $44.95)

–Joy J. Ma

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

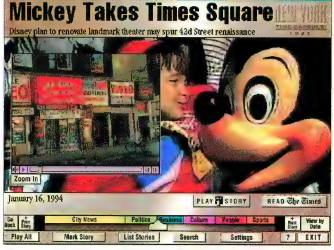
Last Year's Model

They say "old news is no news." But if you slept through the past year, **The CNN Time Capsule 1994** can bring you up to date on the year's "Top 100" stories with a mix of narrated—but poorly synched—CNN video clips, articles from *USA Today* and *U.S. News and World Report*, and even political cartoons. Relive everything from the Republican landslide to Ryne Sandberg's retirement from the Chicago Cubs. The

The top 100 newsmakers of last year show up on **The CNN Time Capsule 1994.**

interface has been improved from CNN's 1993 disc (see Spotlight, July 1994, page 30) and the reporting is more professional, but these stories already have been covered to death, and you won't find any new analysis of their lasting importance.

New York Time Capsule 1994, by



The New York Time Capsule 1994 combines compelling images and video from the Big Apple.

contrast, combines material from New York 1 (a regional cable news network) and *The New York Times* to chronicle the year in the Big Apple. (Thankfully, the '77 stories aren't ranked as they are in the CNN title.) Expatriate New Yorkers and other interested parties can get all the details they missed on last year's topics of conversation. And prideful locals may also enjoy a recap of their metropolis' trials and triumphs. Despite its smaller scope and narrower audience, the New York Time Capsule is a more interesting effort. (Vicarious; 800-465-6540; CNN: $29.95; NY: $19.95)

–Fredric Paul

The CNN Time Capsule 1994
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

New York Time Capsule 1994
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

Greats Debate

When Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were in their prime, they debated the hot issues of the day without resorting to petty name-calling. Grafica Multimedia's **A House Divided: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates** gives you a taste of what it might have been like in the age before sound bites replaced ideas.

Honest Abe argues for the freedom of the slaves.

Produced in cooperation with the recent C-SPAN re-enactment of the famous 1858 senatorial debates over slavery, the title begins at the Reddick mansion (the site of the first Lincoln-Douglas debate) with an explanation of the program's mostly intuitive interface. Click to get an explanation of the events leading up to the debates, or look at an excerpt from a slave's diary or a retrospective of famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

A House Divided deftly weaves together period photos, illustrations, political cartoons, and music, viewable by clicking on various items in the mansion. There's even a game to test your knowledge of the era.

The debates themselves are re-enacted in crisp video clips, but you can also peruse the transcripts in the Library. A House Divided treats its subject with appropriate seriousness, without getting yawningly academic. (Grafica Multimedia; 415-358-5555; $49.95) *–Donald St. John*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

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Spotlight

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

The Birds And the Bees

The illustrations in The Joy of Sex tell all.

When it first appeared in the early 1970s, *The Joy of Sex* was a breath of fresh air—a tasteful encyclopedia that explained and illustrated the how-tos of carnal satisfaction.

Now, Philips Interactive brings a multimedia version of this comprehensive guide to CD-ROM for Windows and Mac PCs (see *E²*'s review of the CD-i version, April 1994, page 64). **The Joy of Sex** features detailed, though sometimes verbose, explanations of everything you may have been afraid to ask, complete with plenty of well-drawn, easy-to-understand illustrations. The title's candid yet gentle tone makes it entertaining and instructive, and the original material has been updated to include a discussion of safe sex. The CD-ROM version's advantage over the book is the combined strength of voiceover and illustration.

The hour-plus worth of video—showing nothing more explicit than kissing and an embrace or two—includes a guided tour of the disc and the insights of a group of adults discussing various topics. You can also answer a questionnaire and play a game to help you determine your Joy of Sex "profile." And to evade prying eyes, you can protect your copy of the product with a password.

At times, sound and video can be choppy. With the virtual memory and RAM disk turned off and a full, hefty 8MB of RAM available, though, the video ran smoothly.

Overall, The Joy of Sex is a worthwhile addition to your home library. Philips even throws in a handy pocket-sized copy of the book to keep on your nightstand. (Philips Interactive; 800-340-7888; $59.95)

–Joy J. Ma and Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD/CD-i
Rating: ★ ★ ★

$20 For A Catalog!?

If you've been breathless for a slightly raunchy CD-ROM vamp on the Victoria's Secret catalog, **Innerware** is for you. More like Frederick's of Hollywood goes hi-tech, this interactive lingerie "catalog" is a hodge-podge of murky videos showing hard-looking models prancing around in too much makeup and not enough clothes—nothing more than slinky separates, boudoir costumery, and leather "clubware."

An Innerware ingenue struts her stuff.

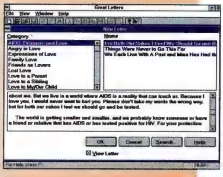
If you can hack your way through the confusing interface, you'll find a button that will let you fax in your order for the leather and lace garments on display. Of course, shopping hardly seems like the point of this piece of fetishware. If you don't like to pay for your catalogs, cruise Innerware's site on the Internet's World Wide Web: http://nyweb.com/prinzessin. (Momentum Electronic Publishing; 800-571-7711; $19.95) *–Fredric Paul*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★

Canned Heat

Not sure how to say "I love you" with appropriate flair? Or how to address the thorny issue of asking your partner to get tested for AIDS? Whatever you do, *don't* consult **101 Love Letters** from Great Bear Technology for help!

With issues this sensitive, no template could do the trick. But that's what you'll get—101 prefab missives designed to guide you through matters of the heart.


Great Letters
101 Love Letters
Category
Stone
Angry in Love
Apologies in Love
Family Love
Friends or Lovers
Lost Love
Love to a Friend
Love to a Husband
Love to My/Her Child
Things Were Never to Go This Far
We Each Live With A Past and Make Hea Head Wa
about sex. But we live in a world where AIDS is a reality that can touch us. Because I love you, I would never want to hurt you. Please don't take my words the wrong way, but for both our sakes I feel we should go and be tested.
The world is getting smaller and smaller, and we probably know someone or have a friend or relative that has AIDS or has tested positive for HIV. For your protection,
OK
Cancel
Spanish
Help
Love Letter

Don't succumb to plug-and-play passion.

It must have seemed like a great idea: Just fill in the blanks and print it out, no messy emotions needed. But the sappy writing makes Hallmark cards sound sincere. It's great to show that you care, but please, no prepackaged sentiments!

Great Bear offers template software for business, legal, and a variety of other types of correspondence—where they may be more appropriate. (Great Bear Technology; 800-795-4325; $39.95)

–Christine Grech

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★

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Spotlight

DIGITAL MYTH-MAKING

Photo Unrealism

1

2

3

Pedro Meyer's original true photos (1 and 2) and his fictional composite (3), "The Temptation of the Angel."

Pedro Meyer's **Truths & Fictions: A Journey from Documentary to Digital Photographs** makes multimedia subversive. The internationally renowned photographer subtly employs the latest digital-editing techniques to create new images from a number of others, reducing notions of photographic "truth" to nonsense.

In "The Temptation of the Angel," for instance, Meyer starts with the image of a young woman dressed as an angel. He explains how he blurs the background to focus the attention and removes the Pepsi signs from the corners of the tables. Then he adds a reversed image of an old woman (about to light the fire under her village's traditional steam baths) to the first. The fire-bearing crone becomes the embodiment of temptation, which the Angel gracefully ignores.

You can peruse the gallery of 40 images on your own, accompanied by spoken insights from Meyer or critic Jonathan Green, director of the California Museum of Photography. If you prefer, sit back and let Green guide you through the gallery.

In the Digital Studio, Meyer describes how he combines and manipulates multiple "true" photographs into "fictional" images with new stories to tell. Finally, the unique Correspondence Section invites 87 artists from 18 countries to comment on the digital revolution.

Meyer's exquisite use of sound, video, and still imagery, along with his gentle expectation of the viewer's intelligence and curiosity, make exploring Truths & Fictions a truly extraordinary experience. Find a taste of Meyer's work on the Internet's World Wide Web at **https://www.voyagerco.com/CD/gh/inside/p.pedro.html.** (Voyager; 800-446-2001; $49.95) *–Ann M. Marcus*

Platform: Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Virtual Reality Comes Home

There's no denying the excitement. Virtual I/O's **i-glasses** pack enough cyber sex-appeal to make opening the box feel like Christmas morning.

The Virtual I/O i-glasses give VR a brave new look.

Reality sets in when you start wrestling with the cables, power supplies, and black boxes necessary to bring the head-mounted display (HMD) to life. Fortunately, the easy-to-understand manual explains how to hook up the glasses to everything from a TV to a video game system to a PC—in just a few minutes.

The $800 PC version of the i-glasses includes headtracking capabilities, but its 150,000-pixel resolution doesn't render readable text. And you'll need to fiddle with headstrap and earphones to get the right fit and focus. But as soon as you load up the specially modified (headtracking- and/or stereovision-enabled) shareware versions of Heretic, Descent, or Magic Carpet bundled with the glasses, things start looking up (…down…all around). You'll be pulled in headfirst. Even games that aren't tweaked for HMD headtracking seem more compelling. The images sit up close and personal, like watching a big-screen TV in a dark room. And the images move when you move.

The major side effect of this VR trip can be a nasty case of motion sickness. And the i-glasses currently don't support Super VGA resolutions. That's a shame, because many PC games and multimedia titles now employ high-res graphics.

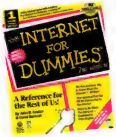
Even with the medium-res and queasiness factors, there's no denying that headtracking adds extra excitement to hunting and blasting. (Virtual I/O; 800-646-3759; $599; $799 for PC version with headtracking) *–Christopher Lindquist*

Platform: Any video source
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Electronic Entertainment SHOPPER

The Internet for Dummies™, 2nd Edition

By John Levine & Carol Baroudi



Cruise the Net like a pro using the new edition of this reader-friendly Internet reference guide. This book is packed with tips, techniques and advice on getting around the electronic village!

BK-347
$19.99

MORE Internet for Dummies™

By John Levine & Margaret Levine Young

Want to know where to go and what to do once connected? This expanded guide is full of great Internet tips for those who dream of accessing and navigating the Net like an on-line pro!

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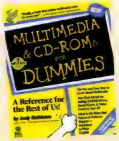
$19.95

Multimedia & CD-ROMs for Dummies™

By Andy Rathbone



Learn all about the complex world of multimedia and CD-ROMs with this easy-to-use reference guide. This is your complete first-aid kit for adding CD-ROM drives, sound cards and video cards to your PC - explained in plain English!

BK-349
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Multimedia & CD-ROMs for Dummies™, Interactive Multimedia Value Pack

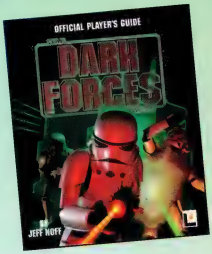
By Andy Rathbone

This book explains the entire world of multimedia and CD-ROMs. Bonus: a hands-on guided tour of multimedia on CD! The CD includes the basic fundamentals of multimedia, plus clip libraries of video, graphics, sounds and more.

BK-350
$29.95

Dark Forces Official Player's Guide

By Jeff Hoff



The Empire is up to some new tricks in Dark Forces, the exciting Star Wars game. Armed with over 240 pages of Jedi tips, strategies, tactics, maps and intelligence secrets, you'll be able to take on the Empire and save the Rebel Alliance.

BK-315
$18.95
Platform: IBM-PC
CD-ROM

Full Throttle Official Player's Guide

By Jo Ashburn

Outwit Little Todd, jump the Poyahoga Gorge and survive the deadly demolition derby with this strategy guide. This guide gives you a complete walk through, hint section and detailed puzzle inventory. With 240 pages of tips and strategies, this book is the Full Throttle enthusiast's guide to success.

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BK-335
Platform: IBM-PC
CD-ROM

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edutainment

In Emma's lab, players can use a terrarium and microscope to help them foil Entrobe and Kid Chaos.

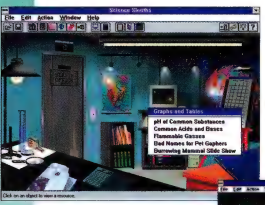
LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Hard Science Made Easy

Plenty of learning programs teach math, reading, geography—even anatomy—but edutainment titles that build physical-science skills are as rare as diamonds. Two new discs for school-age children go a long way toward freshening physical science's stuffy reputation.

The richly designed **Science Sleuths,** for ages 12 and up, resurrects the increasingly moldy private-detective plot device. Players must unravel a pair of mysteries—The Blob and The Exploding Lawnmowers—at three difficulty levels, each with a different outcome. A video briefing explains

Hyperman is on the case—and soon on the tube in his own cartoon.



Science Sleuths puts a virtual science lab—complete with Geiger counter and mass spectrometer—at your disposal.

that lawn mowers around the Printers' Green housing development are exploding without explanation, for example, and kids must learn why. Clues include newspaper clippings, letters, video interviews of witnesses and experts, public records, reference works, and a set of virtual tools to examine specimens. As players work on the case, they record findings in their notebook. When your young sleuths think they have the solution, they present their evidence to Kathryn Wimshurst, Sleuth Extraordinaire and the title's video guide.

Science Sleuths works because players move easily among the program's many resources by clicking on icons or objects as they gather evidence. Science Sleuths demonstrates scientific concepts such as properties of substances and chemical reactions, but players will have such a good time solving the mysteries that they won't care. Look for additional titles in the Science Sleuth series this summer. (Video Discovery; 800-548-3472; $49.95)

Younger investigators with a private eye

Get some advice from the Sleuth Extraordinaire or head to the lab for some investigative work.

for science can check out **The Adventures of Hyperman.** IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio recommends the animated title for ages 7 to 14, but its cartoony feel makes it more appropriate for the younger set.

Hyperman is a bumbling superhero who must capture the evil Entrobe and Kid Chaos before they destroy the world. He can succeed only with the help of brainy Emma C. Squared and your child. As in Science Sleuths, players spend the majority of the time in the lab, discovering concepts they'll need to apply at other locations on the island.

Some times it's easier said than done in the prerelease version we looked at. While the characters offer audio clues, it's not always clear how to apply them to the action, and players will find themselves returning unnecessarily to places they've already been. IBM says this will be corrected in the final product.

The title's graphics are top-notch, rivaling Saturday-morning cartoon quality. In fact, you may confuse the computer screen with the TV screen, as Hyperman will have his own animated TV show on CBS this fall. (IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio; 800-898-8842; $49.95) —*Christine Grech*

Science Sleuths

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

The Adventures of Hyperman

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Lights! Camera! Animation!

After me: "Felix the Cat, the wonderful, wonderful Cat..."

Editing frame-by-frame is a snap with the Cartoon Toolbox Starring Felix the Cat.

Let your Saturday-morning TV mavens direct their own wacky cartoons with Big Top's **Cartoon Toolbox Starring Felix the Cat.** The easy-to-use program helps kids create animated stories starring such classic characters as Felix, the Professor, Poindexter, Vavoom, Rock Bottom, and Master Cylinder.

To make a cartoon, kids create a storyboard using the program's scenery, characters, props, special effects, and sounds. It helps to have a idea in mind, because the program's overwhelming number of choices can confuse the storyboarding process. To animate a character, kids simply drag it in the direction they want it to move.

It's easy enough to edit each frame of the cartoon, but fine-tuning is more limited. A single character can appear only once in each frame; adding another set of movements overrides the original, for example.

The Cartoon Toolbox is quite sophisticated, even for the recommended age of 9 and up. It sports near-professional editing tools and high-quality graphics that resemble big-screen 'toons. Besides being lots of fun, the program encourages kids to take an active approach to multimedia. Talented producers may want to enter their best work in Big Top's contest (entries must be received by February 15, 1996); they can win a princely Felix the Cat wristwatch or have their masterpiece touted in the next version of the Cartoon Toolbox. Send entries to Big Top Productions, 548 4th Street, San Francisco, CA 94107. (Big Top Productions; 800-900-7529; $54.95) *–Joy J. Ma*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Trail Blazing

If your kids loved MECC's Oregon Trail, they'll want to pioneer the new **Oregon Trail II.** As in the original version, players begin in an East Coast city and attempt to emigrate West. But the new CD version lets them try out different routes, explore finely rendered towns and forts, visit merchants and buy supplies, talk with friendly video and animated emigrants, consult rustic maps that track their course, and peruse color photos of historical and geographical monuments.

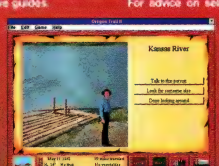
This time around, they also have a choice among 20 or so occupations. Young pioneers can make the game challenging by taking the role of a teacher or artist with meager funds, or they can begin at the top of the food chain as a banker or doctor with lots of money to splurge on deluxe wagons, extra mules, and native guides.

Either way, it doesn't pay to be frivolous or reckless when planning your journey. Pushing your animals too hard can cause them to collapse from exhaustion. And you don't want to get stuck in the Blue Mountains during winter. Likewise, a banjo may lift the spirits, but it won't protect you from a savage blizzard. Tough decisions like these are half the fun of Oregon Trail II.

For advice on selecting supplies and negotiating obstacles—the same ones that plagued actual emigrants 150 years ago—players will want to consult the program's extensive guide, which is an accurate, in-depth historical reference.

No other historical title lets you live the western experience and mingle with its diverse cast of characters quite like Oregon Trail II. (MECC; 800-685-6322; street price $58) *–Bill Meyer*

In the general store, carefully choose the goods you'll bring along for the journey—a wrong decision could be deadly.



Sit a spell and get to know the other characters in Oregon Trail II. They may give you good advice.

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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"How'd you get up that high?"

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Game On

Corey Sandler

Too-High Tech?

I live on a small island, 14 miles wide by 19 miles long. Most of the roads are sand, and the paved two-lanes tend to clog with bicycles, tourists, and hitchhiking seagulls. Yet every year, one summer visitor ferries over a Ferrari Testarossa to park in the beach lot. We residents laugh at the overkill, but we secretly envy the owner.

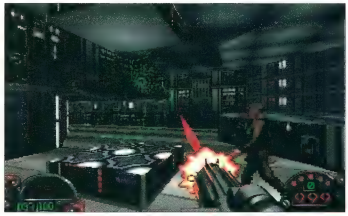
I feel the same way when someone invites me over to play Tetris on his 100MHz Pentium.

Is it already time to toss out last year's super-duper 486DX2/66 machine to empty the cookie jar so we can play our games on this year's high-test, high-tech personal computer? Intel's Pentium processor has been on the market for almost two years; it is now the leading CPU in office purchases and increasingly popular for home machines. When will we see games that take advantage of this Testarossa of a microprocessor and its superhighway of a data bus? The answer is that we already are, although the improvements thus far remain incremental rather than revolutionary.

According to Joe Scirica, vice president for product development at SimCity maker Maxis, the native instruction code within the Pentium chip is a lot more robust than that of a 386 or 486 processor. And the chip's "pipelining" feature permits two instructions to be executed at the same time.

The rise of languages like C instead of chip-specific assembly language, however, tends to minimize the use of native Pentium code in games, reducing the Pentium's performance advantage. Still, a Pentium runs a lot faster than most 486 systems, and the difference is apparent in tasks that eat up a lot of processor time, such as how fast graphics draw and the number of frames per second that can be displayed.

Interestingly, though, for the first time in the history of computer games, it is now possible to hope that new games will work on nearly all current and previous generation machines. Scirica calls the relatively low-tech CD-ROM a "liberating force" for games makers.



Dark Forces has scalable sound and graphics to take advantage of Pentium power.

Video display cards and software drivers may have more of an impact on game play speed than the processor does.

The huge landscape of the CD lets programmers stuff 486, Pentium, Windows, DOS, and even Mac versions of a game on a single disc. The CD can also interrogate the PC to find out what kind of processor, video card, and sound card are in use. That's important, because hybrid discs take up only a single space on crowded retail shelves.

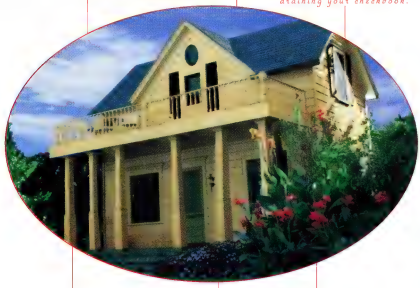
In a similar vein, Ray Gresko, the senior programmer at LucasArts who wrote the 3-D engine for the spectacular new Dark Forces, says that he compensated for different hardware by making the game's programming "scalable." One example involves the number of digital sound channels. For 486 machines, the best setting is about four channels; any more starts to bog down the game play. Pentium users, says Gresko, can play with as many as eight channels without suffering much penalty. "Those who have shelled out the bucks for the Pentium get more sound, full-screen videos, or a smoother display," he says.

But Gresko points out something else: Your video display card and software driver may have more of an impact on game play speed than the processor or bus. "In tests here, we have some 386s running faster than 486s because the 386s have good video cards," he says, "and some 486s can equal or beat a Pentium with the wrong card."

Besides, pushing the envelope can be dangerous. One major developer has been struggling for nearly six months with an important new game. It was intended as a 32-bit multimedia screamer that would be one of the first titles to be optimized for Windows 95.

One by one, the advanced features ended up on the programming-room floor because of unexpected complexity and bugs. But because the writers reached for the stars, the game doesn't run reliably under Windows 3.1 either. The latest beta version I've seen works only under Windows NT, which is sort of like being the best surfer in Kansas.

Finally, *multimedia* finds a *home*.



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Tube Man

Keith Ferrell

Changing of the Guard

Isn't it interesting how inertia keeps corporate wheels spinning in place, while the rest of the world makes tracks on brand-new roads? Case in point: the furor over interactive television.

I mean, how many stories have you seen about new technologies, new strategic alliances, and new initiatives aimed at speeding the transition to interactive television? But while these developments take their sweet time bringing interactivity to your TV set, the existing online world just gets better and more popular on your PC. It seems that those wonderful folks who bring big-budget entertainment into our living rooms are determined to miss the point.

You want to say: "Wake up! The future is now, it's online, and it's already here!"

The world of live, real-time, interactive games and two-way communication, which is at least a portion of the business model for interactive TV, is available now. The technology is in place—try to find a consumer computer without a modem—and the audience is growing at an explosive rate. Tens of millions of people are happily

While the world waits for interactive TV, online entertainment is here today.

exploring cyberspace with their computers, making friends, playing games, and having a great time. Interactive TV hasn't managed to capture the imaginations of the 50 test families who have access to it.

It's funny, but when you look at it, the race between interactive TV and online communication wasn't fair. Computer technology was designed to be interactive, while TV is the ultimate in passive entertainment. Computers are meant to handle a lot of data, to let people interact with and manipulate the data, and to send that data back-and-forth over phone lines. No matter how good "interactive television" becomes—and it may someday become very good indeed—it is still playing catch-up to computers. In fact, to do the job, interactive television sets will essentially become computers themselves; brains will be added to today's dumb boxes.

But millions of us already have very smart, very powerful boxes in our homes and briefcases. That intelligence is the computer's great advantage as an entertainment device. Plug in a telephone line, and you're ready to play via the commercial services, bulletin boards, or the Internet. There is a diversity of entertainment options out there, live and running, ready to go, ready to grow.

Of course, the technology biz is the sort of place where you not only *can* have things both ways, you pretty much have to. So online entertainment via your computer does bring some trade-offs compared to truly interactive television.

The telephone line is the biggest compromise. The pipeline, as they say, is ubiquitous, but narrow and all too easily clogged. Cable television offers a far larger pipeline to many homes, which gives the TV industry its one current advantage. But cable TV is still largely one-way, and re-engineering of telecom regulations could free the cable companies to deliver information services to computers instead of TV sets. The fiber-optic systems that the big corporations hope will pave the Infobahn are still several years and many billions of dollars away from reality.

This is not to say that television won't become more interactive, or that interactive TV is an unachievable goal. Eventually, you'll be able to play solid interactive games on your TV, enjoy movies on demand, interactive newscasts, and high-tech home shopping. But it could take 10 more years. TV is a huge industry, and huge industries move slowly, testing, refining, waiting for technologies and standards to resolve themselves, hesitant to commit until a mass audience shows up.

The computer and online industries got there first because they're accustomed to insane rates of flux. Things change daily, and you either adapt or lose out. The guerrilla tactics of the computer and online industries simply outflanked the stuffy suits of the TV world, and we're the better for it.

Keith Ferrell is senior vice president/director online services for General Media and senior vice president/editor-in-chief of Omni.

Editor's Note: Next month, look for Tube Man to evolve into Wirehead, a new column covering the online scene.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARCOS SUREÑANI

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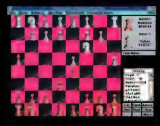

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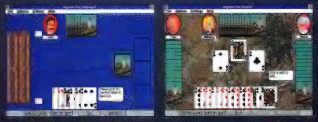

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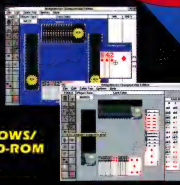

WINDOWS/ MAC CD-ROM

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NOW SHOWING: ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO

By Christine Grech

Welcome to the Electronic Entertainment Expo. Here's your exclusive ticket to previews of the year's hottest games, multimedia, and edutainment.

Do you know what new toys you want for Christmas yet? Just because it's spring, that doesn't mean it's too early to start working on your wish list. Actually, now is the *perfect* time.

This May, sunny Los Angeles—a town famous for its star-studded premieres—hosts the biggest interactive debut of the year. The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E^3) gathers more than 300 hardware and software entertainment companies to unveil their coming attractions for the 1995 holiday season.

Co-sponsored by E^2's parent company, Infotainment World, the show is headlined by the official introductions of the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation—and possibly Nintendo's Ultra 64. (For all the details about the new CD-ROM–based game systems, see "The Future of Gaming?" on page 94.)

But new gaming hardware is only a part of E^3. The show also features a slew of software stars, including plenty of games, multimedia, and edutainment for the PC and Mac. For a taste of what the show has to offer, check out our exclusive preview. It's the next best thing to a ticket to La-La Land.

Madden and other kid classics move to CD-ROM.
Jet Ski Rage makes a splash.
Marilyn Monroe stars in three new titles.
Will The Dig break gaming ground this fall?

Game Show

The show floor at E^3 presents a spectacle of sight and sound, with hundreds of booths vying for attention. But LucasArts is using a private room to display The Dig. This long-awaited adventure game started life almost five years ago as a concept for Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories* TV show, but he decided that it lent itself better to a computer game.

Since then, The Dig has gone through lots of changes, ending up as a cross between *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *Forbidden Planet*, according to project leader Shawn Clark. You take on the role of Boston Low, the commander of a space shuttle on a mission to repair the orbit of an errant asteroid. The asteroid suddenly splits and propels you—along with reporter Maggie Robbins and geologist Ludgear Brink—to an unknown planet where you discover artifacts from a dead civilization. You're now on an urgent archeological dig, in which you must discover who used to live here, what happened to them, and how you're going to get back home.

The game uses LucasArts' SCUMM engine (last seen in Sam and Max) and is heavy on digital audio dialogue, some of it contributed by science-fiction novelist Orson Scott Card. The game looks great, with rendered graphics that accurately depict light and shadows as well as realistic character movement in eight directions. LucasArts swears that you'll see the DOS CD-ROM this fall.

The Dig isn't the only game up LucasArts' sleeve, either. Also look for Rebel Assault II, which launches Rebel pilots Rookie One and Ru Murleen on a completely new *Star Wars* action-adventure shooter with even more voice characterizations than the original. The TIE Fighter CD-ROM, meanwhile, will feature new missions and a whole new game, Defender of the Empire. Look for these games by Christmas.

Other big names will figure into the mix at E^3. Capstone has enlisted William Shatner to promote upcoming games based on his *TEKWAR* TV and book series. Capstone will release the first TEKWAR game this fall.

GT Interactive unveils two brand-new games that are due in October. In Ice & Fire, a futuristic adventure game developed by Zombie, you must salvage an asteroid that's been put under a deep freeze by aliens, while in Vampire: The Masquerade, a role-playing game, you become a creature of the night.

Take 2 Interactive's Millennia: Altered Destinies sends you traveling through time in an attempt to alter the past to change the future. The company also previews the rest of its fall lineup, including Ripper, a 4- or 5-CD game for the PC, Mac, and PlayStation that puts you on the trail of a futuristic Jack the Ripper, due in September.

Millennia: Altered Destinies is part of Take 2 Interactive's fall lineup.

Digital Pictures teases a handful of all-video titles for the PC. Protect an energy pod from an evil dictator in the futuristic action-adventure game Maximum Surge; toss the pigskin in QuarterBack Attack; or search for the ultimate biological weapon in Viral Transmission. All three are currently

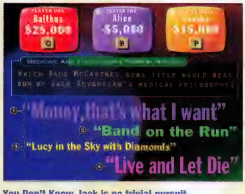
Ice & Fire makes a cool debut at E^3.

being filmed for holiday release.

Top Gun is top dog at Spectrum HoloByte. **Top Gun: Fire at Will!** is a PC action/flying game based on the hit movie. You take the role of Maverick, a new student at the Top Gun flight school. The game stars James Tolkan as the squadron commanding officer—similar to his role in the original movie. (See Star Talk on page 14.) The PC version will ship this summer, to be followed by Top Gun games for the Mac, PlayStation and Ultra 64 later this year, and the company is already at work on a sequel.

Spectrum will also show **Star Trek Generations**, a new Mac and PC game based on the movie that will let you play your choice of Captains James T. Kirk or Jean-Luc Picard as they join forces to defeat Soran.

Berkeley Systems is out to prove that trivia games don't have to be ho-hum with **You Don't Know Jack**, a Windows and Mac CD-ROM developed by Learn Television that will ship this fall. This fast-paced multiplayer game drops you inside a manic game show. The game's 800 bizarre questions and loony categories gleefully mix pop and high culture. And unlike most trivia games, there's no video to bog things down—just lots of great digital audio featuring a cleverly sarcastic host.

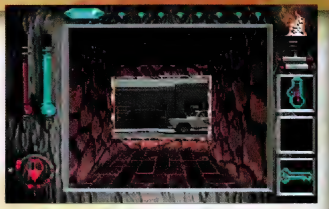


You Don't Know Jack is no trivial pursuit.

Activision shows off its new 3-D polygon engine driving **MechWarrior 2: The Clans**, scheduled for July release. Climb inside one of 14 BattleMechs and fight your way across all kinds of terrain. MechWarrior features network and modem play, with a full network version due later in the year.

Velocity's **Jet Ski Rage** also comes complete with network support. But instead of sealing you in a Mech, it tosses you on top of a high-powered Jet Ski for some wave-riding racing and combat action—under Windows, no less!

Big cats stalk the show in two upcoming games. Sanctuary Woods follows up its award-winning Wolf with **Lion**, the second title in its Predator series for Mac and Windows due out by the end of the year. Similarly, The Discovery Channel Multimedia's **Savage**, developed by Viridis, also puts you inside the fur of a lion attempting to survive. It will roar onto store shelves in October.


Enter this movie portal in Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge.

If lions are too threatening, Virgin's **Toonstruck** will let you climb into a Saturday-morning cartoon. The PC game combines animation and live-action video and is rumored to star several big Hollywood actors.

Viacom New Media offers peeks at several titles we've been hearing about for a while, including **Congo**, the PC and Mac game based upon Michael Crichton's book and upcoming movie; **MTV's Beavis and Butt-head**, a PC and Mac adventure game starring the infamous MTV animated morons, and **Aeon Flux**, an adventure game for the PC, Mac, and PlayStation based on a character from the upcoming MTV series.

Other Hollywood adaptations include Motion Picture Corporation of America's **Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge**, a dark first-person adventure based upon the cult movie *Pumpkinhead II: Bloodwings*. The DOS CD-ROM game uses film footage and original sequences to create "movie portals" in which players enter the video sequences. Bloodwings will ship this summer.

Race against the clock—you've only got an hour—in Time Warner Interactive's **Atmosfear**, a multiplayer Windows and Mac game in which you collect magical keys on your way to the center of a mystical environment. Atmosfear will ship this fall along with **The Basement**, a campy Doom-style 3-D game for Mac and Windows, which has you battling mutant bugs in a B-grade horror movie.

Interactive Magic, the new company run by MicroProse co-founder "Wild Bill" Stealy, debuts its Apache helicopter sim along with several new titles. A flight sim tentatively called **F-16 Combat Pilot** joins a space sim called **Star Ranger**. Back at MicroProse, new titles include a multiplayer version of the best-selling **Sid Meier's Civilization** and **Navy Strike Task Force Command**, a post-Cold War strategy game.

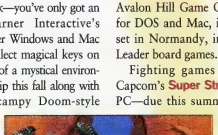
Harlan Ellison's famous tale of post-apocalypse terror, **I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream**, becomes a game for DOS, Mac, and the PlayStation. The Cyber-Dreams game—due out late this summer—lets you play one of five characters resisting the super-computer menace that destroyed mankind.

The dark side is also home to Novell's **Area 51**, which takes you inside the infamous secret military base in Nevada to uncover covert plots and foil conspiracies. Look for it in September.

HarperCollins Interactive gets into games with a pair of titles: **Chaos**, an adventure game based on chaos theory due in August; and **Race for the White House**, an election simulation due in September.

Beyond Squad Leader, due from The Avalon Hill Game Company this summer for DOS and Mac, is a tactical war game set in Normandy, inspired by the Squad Leader board games.

Fighting games on display include Capcom's **Super Street Fighter II** for the PC—due this summer—and GTE Interactive's **FX Fighter**, which will take advantage of 3-D graphics cards for hi-res graphics. GTE also plans to publicly unveil **Pro Hoops '96**, a hi-res hoop game due out in time for the start of next season.


Become a king of the jungle in two new games, including Sanctuary Woods' Lion.

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First Person Perspective & 3-D Graphics Will Blow You Away!!

Like they say, it's not just the Navy, it's an adventure! It's USS Ticonderoga, the incredibly realistic naval simulator ***that puts you in command and in the center of battle.*** Everyone is counting on you as the Annapolis-bred hotshot commanding the flagship missile cruiser of the Navy's modern fleet. It's as close as you can get to serving in the Navy without enlisting.

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Entertainment means more than just games, and E^3 will host plenty of new multimedia titles. FlagTower Multimedia is promoting its new titles with a fully operational tank in its booth. The heavy artillery supports the company's Visions of War Collection, multimedia documentaries covering **World War I, World War II,** the **War in the Pacific,** and **Great Generals of the 20th Century.**

Tinseltown is the perfect venue for a bevy of Marilyn titles, including a beefed-up version of **Hard Evidence: The Marilyn Monroe Files** from WordPerfect. If that's not enough, Fox is flashing bits of the **Marilyn Monroe Interactive Biography,** due on the PC by the end of the year. Finally, Gazelle Technologies offers **Marilyn and Andre,** a PC title built around some 200 "lost" photographs of Monroe, due in May.

Knowledge Adventure and Steven Spielberg team up in The Casper Storybook.

Our Times, an Interactive Tour of the 20th Century from Vicarious, looks back at the key events of this century, based on an upcoming book from Turner Publishing. Look for it by the end of the year. A very different look at our times comes from Medio's **Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer,** due in May.

Following on the success of the Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual, Simon & Schuster will show June's **Star Trek Interactive Encyclopedia,** a voice-activated compendium to all the *Star Trek* movies and TV shows. Or get close to Mr. Worf in **Klingon Warrior,** a Starfleet Academy training program concerning this testosterone-crazed species, due out in October.

Sony Music takes a new tack on musical multimedia with a new collection of floppy-based screen savers featuring musicians from Columbia, Epic, and associated labels. The disks also include video clips and games. Sony is also using E^3 to show off its first **CD-Plus** enhanced music titles.

Don't be afraid; you're not alone in the multiplayer Atmosfear.

Sports fans can root for a pair of Windows and Mac titles this September. **RealTime Sports: 75 Seasons—The History of the National Football League** and **The Official NFL Interactive Yearbook '95-'96** are both hosted by Pat Summerall.

L3 Interactive, the company behind the Learning Cube interface, puts it in a pair of new titles for Windows, MPEG, and 3DO. **The Atomic Files** examines the Atomic Age, while **The Real Line** goes in-line skating. Both are due this summer.

Edutaining Experiences

For kids, the biggest E^3 news brings classic characters to the computer. Living Books, for example, unveils its long-awaited **Dr. Seuss** title, which will ship this fall. And Casper the Friendly Ghost—who's now appearing in his own movie—will soon materialize on computer screens in Knowledge Adventure's **Casper Storybook,** for ages 3 to 8. Casper is the first title from the Steven Spielberg/Knowledge Adventure partnership.

Similarly, Madeline, the French schoolgirl star of children's storybooks, will appear in ABC/EA Home Software's **Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show.** The title will debut in August, along with a Saturday-morning cartoon show on ABC. And ABC/EA's **ABC Schoolhouse Rock** series, based upon the musical cartoon shorts, will debut for PC and Mac at the end of the year.

Curious George, the mischievous chimp star of several Houghton Mifflin books, will have his own CD-ROM this fall: **Create Your Own Adventure with Curious George: Curious George Comes Home** sends George back to the zoo for escapades that your child must help him sort out. Also from Houghton Mifflin, **Awesome Animated Monster Maker** lets kids play Dr. Frankenstein by creating their own weird and wonderful creatures.

Welcome Curious George to your computer.

Simon & Schuster Interactive's **The Great Shape Escape,** meanwhile, offers original puzzles for ages 3 to 8. For older kids, Simon & Schuster trots out **American Heritage's Civil War** and **Maurice Ashely Tackles Chess.**

Davidson, meanwhile, debuts **Fisher-Price Sing Alongs-Barnyard Rhythm and Moos,** for ages 3 to 7, and **Fisher-Price Great Adventure Castle,** for ages 4 to 7.

Kids can learn about the birds and bees—and some 50 other bugs—in two upcoming learning games and electronic field guides from Swfte. **The Multimedia Bird Book** and **The Multimedia Bug Book** will be delivered this summer.

Morgan the chimp returns in Morgan Interactive's Romp Through History Series: **Colonial Quest: A Revolutionary Adventure.** Beginning in October, kids 7 to 12 can experience colonial times in this Windows and Mac disc. And MECC's **Opening Night** puts its show on screen. The Windows and Mac title lets kids direct characters, select scenery, and choose lighting, sound effects, and music.

Become a bug catcher in Swfte's The Multimedia Bug Book.

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Computer KAPOW!

Mighty heroes and devious villains forge a path to the multimedia arena for an all-out battle against boredom.

Comic books and computers make a dynamic duo. After all, many of us got our first taste of the marvels of advanced technology through comics and graphic novels. Remember the Justice League satellite? How 'bout the Batcave? Or Wonder Woman's Invisible Jet?

A new wave of interactive comics on CD-ROM and online is updating that connection. Established comics companies and new upstarts are using multimedia to create a new genre of interactive comics, complete with both familiar characters and new digital ones.

The latest generation of digital comics puts you in control. Change the point of view, alter the perception of events, or redirect the plot to suit your mood. And this interactivity means that you're not locked into a linear storyline. Finally, the addition of video, sound effects, and animations to words and pictures can add a new level of dramatic intensity.

Interactive comics will help committed fans find new ways to get involved in comics adventures and help usher graphic-novel neophytes into new kinds of computer thrills.

Superheroes on Disc

Comics companies and multimedia developers aren't necessarily trying to replace the old paper editions. Instead, they're bringing the comic experience to life and letting you control the action.

Malibu Comics broke the interactive ice two years ago with CD-Romix, a line of titles adapted from Malibu's Ultraverse paper comics. Essentially, CD-Romix translated the original comics (some 130 panels spread over 60 screens) word for word, panel for panel, onto a CD-ROM (see "Comic Books Go PC," February 1994, page 12). Minor animations and a simple soundtrack carried readers through the story but did little to enhance the originals. Experiencing CD-Romix was little more entertaining than sitting on the couch with a comic book. And the computer couldn't redraw the screens as fast as you could turn the pages.

The cybercomic The Mask: not exactly Smokin'.

Copyright problems forced Malibu to withdraw the original CD-Romix from the market, but the company is now negotiating to create a new line of comics on CD and floppy disk based on Malibu best sellers Rune, Lord Pumpkin, UltraForce, and Mantra.

Like CD-Romix, Cambrix Publishing's The Mask: The Origin boasts some 200-plus pages enhanced with minor animation, but doesn't go far beyond the Dark Horse comic on which it is based.

Comics

By Joel Enos

Heroic's League of Champions will soon go digital.

Heroic Publishing is bringing its comics characters out in CD-ROM versions, including Icicle and Flare (slated for distribution by Knight Media Com late this year). The three-part discs will feature a comic-book storyline, games, and puzzles.

The discs make it easy for newcomers to get up to speed with Heroic's League of Champions by providing fact files on each character. Simply click on a character to bring up a biography and find out about his relationships to the story and the other characters.

Although these interactive touches help Icicle outshine earlier digital comics, they still only represent incremental improvements over reading paper comics. And while the titles' character backgrounds help to pull you into Heroic's world, so much has already happened in the long-running paper-comics series that newcomers may still come away a little confused.

Starting from Scratch

Instead of stand-alone interactive experiences, today's digital comics tend to be collector items for fans of the paper books. To create a following for digital comics, companies may have to create characters specifically for the new media.

InVerse Ink, a new company, is developing original characters and storylines, created exclusively for its upcoming CD-ROM series. The first title, Reflux, uses video footage licensed from Chinese martial arts movies to bring its stories to life. When you click on certain panels, the drawing turns into video footage of the action. Reflux has an average of three video panels per "page"; each non-video panel contains a hot spot that reveals morphs, animations, and sound clips. If the morphs or video advance the story, the panel is redrawn to reflect the action. "We think we've found a new way to tell a story, and we know we've found a way to make comics truly interactive," says Jamey Harvey, executive producer of InVerse Ink. (Harvey is also a producer at Tao Media, the company that creates E^2's own CD-ROMs.)

Jack into the Verse with Reflux.

Reflux takes place in the year 2013, when people have begun to interact with one another by plugging their brain stems into a virtual-reality world called the Verse. The main character, Frank (Flux), is a fugitive framed for erasing his best friend's brain. Flux can take on various faces, which comes in handy as he evades the evil WorldPerfect Corporation headhunter Roark. Although the disc will have only one story and one outcome, you can follow it as Flux, Roark, or Id, Flux's computerized personal assistant. When you select a new character's perspective, the tone of the story changes, including all of the dialogue bubbles, text blocks, hot spots, and morphs. You can also call up character files and get background information on the Verse. InVerse Ink plans to follow up Reflux with quarterly Verse installments.

Reflux may be the coolest graphic novel currently available, seamlessly integrating video, a cyber-storyline, and a jazz soundtrack. Although Reflux's characters and plot lines easily stand up to a paper comic's, InVerse Ink must attract comics fans with cutting-edge technology, not established characters. Besides, it would take three separate volumes to tell the complete story contained on the disc, which lists for less than $20.

Neuro Jack has seized this screen!
The Ghomans are a race of cybernetic heads so hopped up on computers they've built their whole society around them. They didn't appreciate it when I crept into their systems and they sent the Rogers on to destroy me.
To return to INVENTO

Neuro Jack takes a bite out of Prodigy's Tekno Comix Forum.

Online Infiltration

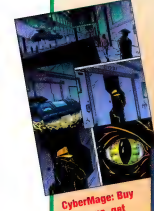
Comics are just moving onto CD-ROM, but they've been living online for a while. Comics fans have long been able to log onto online services, such as CompuServe, America Online, and Prodigy to discuss comics-related topics. Sometimes, fans could even download artwork posted by comics companies. But lately, the online comics scene has really taken off.

In August of last year, Marvel Comics, the largest publisher of comic books in North America, launched a promotional digital copy of the entire first issue of Generation X, a paper comic featuring Marvel's top selling X-Men. It's available on CompuServe's Comics and Animation Forum (to download, type Go Comics) as well as on the Internet's World Wide Web (http://www.st.nepean.uws.edu.au/stuff/genx/).

Some 4,000 subscribers have downloaded Generation X. The process takes about an hour using a 14.4 Kbps modem and costs about $5 in online charges.

Doug Pratt, systems operator for CompuServe's Comics and Animation Forum, has recently set up a Downloadable Comics area in the forum where you can preview upcoming comics and talk back to their creators. You can find painted panels for Daniel Brereton's modern gothic Nocturnals from Malibu Comics Bravura imprint, or take a first look at Moon Shot—the story of

The Comics Game



Comic-book characters make great game protagonists, from Superman to The X-Men. Following in that tradition, this winter GTE Interactive Software will release Tank Girl, an all-video adventure game based on the Dark Horse comic book character. It will feature Lori Petty, star of the upcoming movie (GTE Interactive; 800-483-8632; DOS CD, not yet priced)

Likewise, Sony Imagesoft is scheduled to release a PC and Mac game based on Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* next spring. (Sony Imagesoft; 800-922-7669; DOS CD/Mac CD/PlayStation, not yet priced) And Acclaim recently secured the rights to develop PC games based on Marvel Comics' Maximum Carnage 2, X-Men, Wolverine, and Spider-Man. (Acclaim; 516-656-9000; DOS CD; not yet priced)

The folks at Acclaim are also thinking the other way around. Earlier this year, Armada Comics, a new Acclaim imprint, began publishing three new comics featuring characters from Magic: The Gathering, a series of card and computer games. The comics incorporate the game's spell-casting system into the storylines, and will expand on the adventures of the characters. (Acclaim Comics; 516-656-5000; $2.50 each)

Likewise, *Mortal Kombat #1*, based upon the hit game Mortal Kombat, bowed in July of last year from Malibu Comics. The comic, titled *Mortal Kombat: Blood and Thunder*, follows the adventures of Johnny Cage and the rest of the MK gang. (Malibu Comics; 818-878-7400; $2.95 each) Likewise, video game star Sonic the HedgeHog has a line of comics published by Archie Comics. (Archie Comics; 914-381-5155; $1.50 each)

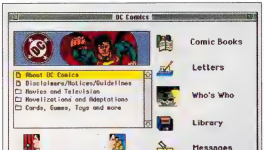
Finally, the upcoming *CyberMage: Darklight Awakening* from Adhesive Comics will simultaneously be released with the Origin game of the same name. In fact, the game will come bundled with the first issue of CyberMage. The game's manual will be in comic book form. Both titles debut in September. Adhesive also runs a World Wide Web site with an electronic comic called The Eden Matrix, which is periodically updated. (Go to http://www.eden.com, then go to the Comics section.) (Origin Systems; 800-245-4525, DOS CD; not yet priced. Adhesive Comics; 512-478-9900; $2.95 each) *–JE*

the Apollo XII in comic form—from Pepper Pike Graphix.

Another place to check out is CompuServe's Comic Publishers Forum, where you can preview Silk Purrs Press' Sophistikats, a soap opera spoof featuring funny animals in antics that rival those of the gang at *Melrose Place*. To find it, download the cover of Antarctic Press' anthology, Wild Life #11. The first Sophistikats comic, The Sophistikats Katch-Up Kollection, will debut in July, but you can preview it on the May/June issue of the CompuServe CD.

Meanwhile, DC comics—the No. 2 North American comic publisher, has teamed up with America Online to create DC Comics Online. You can chat with DC staff members, download artwork and previews featuring prominent DC characters like DeathStroke and Looker, and even download covers from DC's new comics. (Practically all of DC Comics' covers are archived there.)

Weekly events on the DC Forum include talks with comics editors and guest appearances by celebrities such as John Shea (Lex Luthor on TV's *Lois and Clark*). Of course, AOL still maintains its lively but less-organized Comics Forum.



Chat with your favorite writers on AOL's DC Comics Online.

The Robins of the Online World

Marvel and DC may rule the world of paper comics, but cyberspace offers a chance for small or new companies to get involved. That means that online comics action often presents new characters that haven't yet hit the stores.

Tekno Comix, a new company co-founded by two of the creators of the Sci-Fi Channel, is showcasing its new books on Prodigy, for example. In the Tekno Comix Forum, you'll find previews such as Leonard Nimoy's Primortals and Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe, which were launched late last year.

Jump to "Tekno" to explore this distinctly interactive forum. Along with chat rooms and behind-the-scenes looks and previews, you'll discover hot keys and secret menus; click on the right spot—an eyeball, for example—and you'll find a whole new set of options. And then there's Neuro Jack, a digital fugitive who not only has his own section in the Tekno Verse where you can follow his story, but also lurks around the forum and randomly appears on your screen. Look for a Tekno Comics Web page by the end of the year.

Heroic Publishing may actually have started this online trend. Days before Marvel first uploaded Generation X, Heroic Publishing released Sparkplug, which it believes to be the first full-length comic-book story ever published online. Sparkplug debuted on GEnie at a hefty 28 pages, catching the attention of many GEnie subscribers.

Do-It-Yourself Comics

Don't worry if you haven't heard of Johnny Normil from Planet Bactria or his nemesis Katarina Von Emblem, the demon child. But if you pick up Putnam New Media's Comic Creator, chances are you'll find yourself spending a lot of time with them—or whatever you choose to rename them. Johnny and Katarina are just two of the characters among Comic Creator's 18 choices that you can use to create your own comic-style panels. If you don't like any of the included characters, use the Import feature to bring in additional drawings. Plop in the characters, add dialogue and narration with the assortment of text balloons, and you've got a comic book that you control.

What next? You decide.

The best part of Comic Creator is that your creations are truly customizable. You can flip, move, or resize figures and position them in a variety of poses. Putnam also throws in plot tips and story starters. (Putnam New Media; 800-631-7571; Mac/Win CD, $39.95) —*JE*

To Be Continued...

Multimedia and online services give comics companies the chance to try something new. So far, though, their attempts at turning comic books into an interactive experience have not been overly successful. After all, why bother with a CD that takes minutes to load each page, when you can instantly flip the pages of a paper comic book?

Instead of trying to replace comic books or merely recreating them digitally, successful online and CD comics may have to provide an alternative experience while retaining the traditional comic flavor.

"Simply filming a stage production doesn't make it a movie; it's just a film of a stage production. Digital comics are the same way," says Ron Knight of Knight Media Com, which is publishing Heroic's and Archie's CD-ROMs.

Developers are still working on how to create truly digital comics. Expect to see some that are worth following and plenty of others worth forgetting. Stay tuned for the next installment...

Comic Relief

Comics CD-ROMs

The Mask: The Origin
(Cambrix Publishing; 818-992-8484; Win CD/Mac CD, $39.95)

Icicle (Issues 1 & 2), **Flare**
(Knight Media Com; 914-398-1922; Mac/DOS/Win CD, not yet priced)

REFLUX: The Becoming
(InVerse Ink; 510-770-1344; Win CD/Mac CD, $19.95)

Online Comics

Comic Publishers Forum
(CompuServe; 800-848-8990; Go Compub)

Comics and Animation Forum
(CompuServe; 800-848-8990; Go Comics)

Comics RoundTable (GEnie; 800-638-9636; Keyword: Comics)

DC Comics Online
(America Online; 800-827-6364; Keyword: DC Comics)

Tekno Comix Forum
(Prodigy; 800-776-3449; Jump Tekno)

The Web is alive with the sound of music.

By Donald St. John

Not to mention the images, facts, and just about anything else associated with every imaginable musical genre. The Internet's World Wide Web has a growing capability to transmit images and store sound and video files, which makes it a natural interface for enjoying music in many forms.

In fact, if you're one of the privileged few with a high-powered workstation and the video reception ability known as multicasting backbone, or "Mbone," you can even watch a primitive version of real-time live concerts via the Web—an ability the Rolling Stones, among other bands, have already taken advantage of. And you won't have to wait too many years until basic PCs and Macs can do that.

Sony Music serves up a tasty platter.

easy to find the artist/band you're interested in; just click on the first letter of its name and scan alphabetically. Click on the blue-highlighted link, and you're there. If you're feeling experimental, there are plenty of young, unrecorded bands interspersed among the biggies. If you don't want to wade through American's offerings, go directly to the WWWM by typing **http://american.recordings.com/wwwofmusic/index.html**.

Oh, say can you hear...

Addicted to Noise is the Web's most comprehensive music publication.

Rock

The Internet's World Wide Web is like a

not created equal. Some are the digital equivalent of Muzak, while others rock hard enough to impress Metallica. For a sample of the best, here's our take on more than a dozen rockin' Web sites—and, more important, the ways to link to all of them. Fire up your modem, get your account ready (whether it be a straight Internet account or Prodigy, Delphi, America Online, or CompuServe browsers), and let the music begin.

The Mother of All Music Pages

If you're not quite sure where to go first, our suggestion is the American Recordings label's home page at **http://american.recordings.com**. That's not because of American itself (formerly known as Def Jam), although its roster of such artists as The Black Crowes, Danzig, and Johnny Cash is interesting enough.

No, the real reason you want to visit here is its Web Wide World of Music (WWWM). Simply put, this is the Powerlink. You can access a staggering 1,000-plus music-related home pages directly from the WWWM, from A (Swedish poppers a-ha) to Z (new jazzers Rotcod Zzaj). The page's simple index-based design makes it easy to find the artist/band you're interested in; just click on the first letter of its name and scan alphabetically. Click on the blue-highlighted link, and you're there. If you're feeling experimental, there are plenty of young, unrecorded bands interspersed among the biggies. If you don't want to wade through American's offerings, go directly to the WWWM by typing **http://american.recordings.com/wwwofmusic/index.html**.

Where It All Began...

The other great spot to scope out up-and-coming bands is the Internet Underground Music Archive (IUMA), which pioneered the practice of making low-fi—but listenable—sound files available for downloading (see Sharp Edge, September 1994, page 9). Some of the big record labels have bands here, but IUMA is primarily a place to hear cool new unknowns. You'll find this alternative Mecca at **http://www.iuma.com**. To listen to sound clips that you download, you'll need a sound player, such as the shareware Sound Machine, for your PC or Mac. If you don't have a player, download Sound Machine from any of several software archives.

Another independent resource is Wood & Wire, an Australian page that links to many independent labels, bands, and fanzines. Give these mates a go at **http://www.magna.com.au/woodwire/index.html**.

Look for the Label

The popularity of the Web has not escaped the established record labels, either. Warner Bros. and Geffen

In the meantime, the Web is crawling with more music-related pages than you could read in a year. From progressive rock to classical symphonies to Indian *ragas*, it's all there in an electronic feast for the eyes and ears. Most sites include the basics: facts, discographies, .GIF files of album covers and photos, and links to related Web pages. More exciting entries add downloadable audio and video samples to their platter.

IUMA is chock-full of sound samples from scores of bands.

But every music site on the Web is

Online

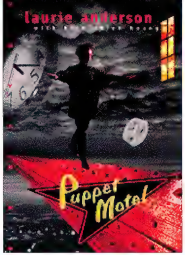
virtual trip to the record store, only better.

Records' DGC imprint take advantage of IUMA, while others have mounted home pages of their own. You can find Sony Music artists on the Columbia, Epic, or Legacy labels at **http://www.sony.com/Music/**, where Sony posts new releases, tour schedules, artist bios, and sound and video clips. For the latest poop, read the site's Daily Dish newsletter.

New Agey Windham Hill checks in at **http://windham.com**. This site

Megadeth's home page—not your typical tourist attraction.

is jam-packed with sound clips of not just Windham's well-known contemporary instrumental artists, but the more rollicking sounds of such bands as Timbuk 3 and the subdudes from



Laurie Anderson offers a sneak peek at her upcoming CD-ROM.

The Beautiful South and Portishead, keeps its page at **http://www.godiscs.co.uk/godiscs/**.

D.I.Y.

Bet on the coming year to bring a fair amount of pages mounted directly by artists themselves (as opposed to the majority of artist-related pages at present, which are done by hardcore fans). Two who have already leapt into the fray are the Stones, who are accessible at the very simple **http://www.stones.com**, and the groundbreaking performance artist Laurie Anderson, who has a page in conjunction with her recent tour and new Voyager CD-ROM, Puppet Motel. Go to **http://www.voyagerco.com/LA/VgerLa.html**. If you're in a harder-rocking mood, visit Megadeth, Arizona, the speed-metal band's page at **http://bazaar.com/Megadeth/megadeth.html**.

Windham Hill's High Street subsidiary. Windham Hill plans to eventually mount some works in progress by its artists to the site.

MCA Records presents its stable in the form of a magazine called AMP. Each month, it features a different band as well as updates on MCA releases and tours. Cruise to AMP at **http://www.mca.com/mca_records/index.html**.

Canada's Nettwerk Productions was among the first labels to take on the Web, and it credits a base of computer-savvy listeners for the popularity of its artists Sarah McLachlan and Single Gun Theory. You can tap into both those acts and a host of others at nettweb 2.03; type **http://www.wisey.com/nettwerk/** to get there.

If you like your sounds cool and British, Go! Discs may be the place for you. The label, which has scored recent international successes with

Read All About It

Heeding the old maxim "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em," a couple of print magazines have ported their efforts to the Web. Notable among these is *The Vibe*, Time Warner's monthly guide to the hip-hop world. Feel the groove (and read many other Time Warner magazines) at **http://pathfinder.com**. A more independent voice (and an online-savvy one, having been on CompuServe for some time) is the excellent folk/world music magazine *Dirty Linen*, which lives online at **http://www.dirtynelson.com/linen**. Check this site for information on genres ranging from classic singer-songwriter tunes to Celtic sounds.

Even more exciting, Web-only publications are popping up like dandelions after the rain; the Web is an instant printing press for anyone who wants to start their own 'zine. The most ambitious effort is no doubt Addicted to Noise. Read what the cream of the rock critic crop has to say at **http://www.addict.com/ATN/**. More homemade 'zines also abound: Search for them either through Wood & Wire or through John Labovitz's E-Zines List at **http://www.ora.com:8080/johnl/e-zine-list/**.

Can't Find It?

If you still can't nail down online access to your faves, don't despair: The Web is loaded with ways to search for music topics (or anything else). We suggest starting with Yahoo at **http://www.yahoo.com**, which has a nice list of music resources broken down by genre. It also links you to other search engines such as Lycos, Web Crawler, and the World Wide Web Worm.

Rock's most recognizable icon comes to the 'net.

If you *still* can't find what you're looking for, start your own band and mount a Web site to broadcast your music. You don't even have to sell your soul to the record company.

THE DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER

Mechadeus, the company that brought us Critical Path, is back with The Daedalus Encounter. This time, though, there's more than just slick video. Daedalus features a blockbuster star—Tia Carrere, the babe-alicious star of *Wayne's World*—a high-flying story, and a much bigger and tougher chunk of game play.

Daedalus rockets you into the future to join three survivors of the First Inter-Galactic War: Ari (Carrere), Zack (Christian Bocher), and your alter ego, Casey. Unfortunately, though, Casey's just a partial survivor; he was mutilated beyond recognition when his craft collided with an out-of-control Vakkar fighter during the conflict's final battle. (The terrific opening cinematics, and the rest of the game, were rendered on the PC using Autodesk's 3D Studio. See "The Software Behind Scenes," November 1994, page 64.)

Months after the battle, Casey wakes up to find Ari recounting the grisly event. The only thing the medics could save was his gray matter, which some lab rat promptly sealed in a tube and threw on a shelf. Ari and Zack broke Casey out of the hospital, but the best they could do was to stuff his leftovers into a flying mechanical probe. Now the trio run a spaceship salvage business that scours the galaxy for the war's burned-out remains.

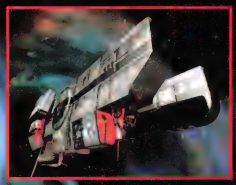
You play from Casey's point of view, and even though you're a brain-in-a-box, yours is the primary role in the game. From the first bit of game play—a salvage sweep of a Vakkar freighter—you'll find that Casey can be real handy with doors, lasers, mechanical arms, lights, and alien devices. These skills become even more crucial once Ari crashes your contraband ship into a giant, organic alien vessel that's on a collision course with the explosive core of a star.

You have to help your crewmates explore the Seti's strange, inhuman craft and discover why it's being propelled toward certain doom—at least for the three of you. To succeed, you must solve a mind-boggling variety of geometric door puzzles, blow away savage Piranha-like aliens, navigate through complex mazes, and discover how to communicate with your Seti hosts. And—not to give everything away—the exciting endgame will challenge both your wits and your conscience.

This exciting three-disc adventure makes Critical Path seem short and pale by comparison. For a look at what's in store, hop aboard our free Guided Tour. (Virgin Interactive; 800-874-4607; Mac CD/Win CD, street price $50; 3DO, not yet priced)

By Bill Meyer

Mechadeus is back with Tia Carrere and more game play in the much-anticipated space adventure The Daedalus Encounter.



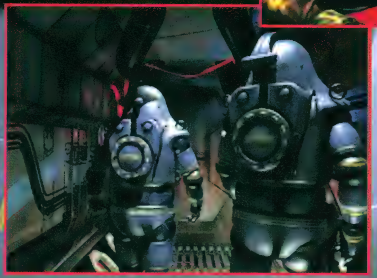
GUIDED TOUR

1 Your crewmates Ari and Zack tell you that you're a brain-in-a-box. **TIP:** Pay attention. If you don't prove that you're really in there, they'll pull the plug.

2 Here's Casey (you) in all his flying lunch-box glory. He's not quite up to romancing Ari, but his sharpshooting skills, quick wits, and ability to communicate with the ship's alien hosts are critical to the group's survival.

5 To get anywhere on the Seti you'll open doors by solving lock puzzles. Figuring out this puzzle gets you into the ship's Engine Room. After some poking around, you'll end up in the Observation Room, where you come face-to-face with the Krinn for the first time. Use your laser, but don't torch your buddies. **TIP:** With the door puzzles, create shapes in the surround circles that reveal another

3 The controls inside Casey let you respond to commands from Ari and Zack, such as finding and grabbing important alien objects. Be sure you understand what each switch does. You usually only have a matter of seconds to respond to your cohorts' requests; if you take too much time, the game could end in a hurry.

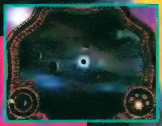


4 Ari and Zack are forced to throw on their Gears to avoid any poisonous gases left over after their ship's collision with the Seti vessel. But noxious fumes are the least of their problems. While investigating the premises, Zack discovers that the whole shebang is hurtling toward a lonely rendezvous with a star.

6 As if figuring out how to avoid becoming flambé wasn't tough enough, this dying Seti looks like it's been eaten alive. That pulsing colored light? Was it trying to say something? It won't take you long to figure out what caused this alien's demise. Further up the hall, you'll find the gaping hole where ravenous flying beasts called Krinn invaded the Seti ship.

7 The battle with the Krinn will be more dramatic for your sensitivity. You'll have to instruct Ari and Zack to play dummy and apply the right resistance. Your own insides are the puzzle this time. To stay on and running, close all the open circuits by clicking on color-coded switches.
TIP: If you click on a switch, a corresponding color-coded switch will flicker.

8 Get in the ship's Meditation Chamber and a platform will lift you through a pink energy field to a Seti virtual-reality room. Here, you'll get a glimpse at the aliens' lush homeworld. You'll also find an astronomical puzzler that provides a clue to your predicament.
TIP: Solving this puzzle requires an astronomical event that happens once in a blue moon.



9 This door puzzle opens to the ship's farm. Sounds lovely, right? Not really: It's not easy to get off this farm. Find a corridor and click on it, and a QuickTime movie leads you down the right—or wrong—path through a bewildering maze.

10 Once you've figured out how to talk with the Seti, you can have a peaceful close encounter with this Priest and discover why you're en route to a too-close encounter with a star. If you haven't figured it out—well, that's another story.

11 After opening all the ship's doors, Ari and Zack get discouraged and sulk in the central hub. But you're free to explore the whole ship and probe for more answers to your predicament. It lies, in part, in retrieving orbs like this one in Ari's hand.
TIP: A secret chamber and a way to divert the ship awaits if you discover the significance of the orbs.

12 Despite their bulky appearance, the Seti are peaceful, highly evolved crustaceans. The Seminary, their place of worship behind this door puzzle, confirms this. Inside, analyze the hieroglyphics on the room's columns with your multi-light to learn the history of your hosts.
TIP: This is no art show. The keys to Seti communication are in here.

Gamestick

Wired For SpeeD

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Interactive Improvements

It's easy to dismiss interactive movies. Despite all the hype, many of the recent full-motion-video games subjected virtual theater-goers to innumerable stops and starts; lackluster game play; blurry, undersized videos; and autistic audio.

But even if you were not dazzled by the likes of Flash Traffic and Corpse Killer, it may be time to take a second look. Game developers still believe in the interactive movie experience, and new video and audio techniques could turn these games from bombs to blockbusters.

Electronic Arts' Psychic Detective uses new audio and video technology to put you in all the characters' heads.

The best example may be Psychic Detective, a new video-based mystery game from Electronic Arts and Colossal Pictures due out this fall. You play psychic Eric Fox, who has the ability to jump inside other characters' heads to see the world from their point of view. To make the jumps smoother and avoid annoying audio or video dropouts, the companies created a new technique to simultaneously interweave multiple audio and video streams.

Electronic Arts producer Jim Simmons doesn't want the technology to overshadow the game, but says it adds "dramatic flow" to the experience. Seamless transitions help Psychic Detective tap the "movie/TV part of your brain" that isn't as concerned with puzzle-solving, Simmons says.

Propaganda Code wants to do away altogether with traditional game interfaces in its new interactive movies. Johnny Mnemonic, published by Sony Imagesoft and shipping now, and the upcoming Mirage, to be published by Time Warner Electronic Publishing and released in spring 1996, let you click directly on the video to move the action along. According to managing director Jonathan Wiedemann, "Code's software allows the player to interact directly with the content, rather than an interface. It's a more emotional experience." (For more on Johnny Mnemonic, see "A Hole in the Head," February 1995, page 67.)

Digital Pictures is banking on its proprietary

Scouting Report

Game News You Can Use

Interplay now has its own World Wide Web site. Log in at http://www.interplay.com for the company's latest demos, patches, news, contests, giveaways, hints, messaging, and technical support. Interplay also plans to offer online game shopping via credit card.

*

Board-game maker and PC game developer Avalon Hill has a pair of new historical simulations on DOS floppy and CD-ROM: 1830: Railroads & Robber Barons and the World War II military sim, Stalingrad. The former puts you at the helm of a 19th century railroad corporation trying to lay tracks westward to ship immigrants and speculators to the frontier. Unfortunately, history's greatest Robber

Avalon Hill's Stalingrad recreates the bloody defeat of the Third Reich at the hand of the Allies.

Barons try to bring down your growing empire by undercutting your lines and buying out your stock. Meanwhile, Stalingrad highlights the Eastern Front battles that ensured the defeat of the Third Reich. The game features multiple historical scenarios that simulate various battles, culminating with the annihilation of the Nazi 6th Army. Players can make strategic decisions on the army level or concentrate on tactical moves that simulate block-by-block troop movements in cities. Stalingrad and 1830 are both on store shelves now.

*

Compilations seem to be the newest trend in entertainment software. Activision is playing along with three CD-ROM collections for the Mac and PC. MacBestsellers includes Soviet game-master Alexey Pajitnov's Super Tetris, the classic flight sim Hellcats Over The Pacific, and the 3-D action game Spectre. PowerGame III for PC gamers includes Super Tetris, Spectre, and F-15 Strike Eagle III. Look for them now at $39.95 each.

software-based video compression technology to erase perceptions of poor video quality in interactive movies. Like Slam City With Scottie Pippen for the 486 and Pentium, its upcoming titles Viral Transmission and Quarterback Attack will deliver high-quality, full-screen, full-motion video on the PC this fall. Hopefully, Digital's second foray into video sports games will go beyond an interactive sneaker commercial.

"We want to make the experiences as real as possible," says Digital Pictures president Tom Zito. "Expanding the screen size, the clarity [and] fluidity of the video, and the instant interaction is all part of achieving that reality."

Rise of The Triad Cheats

Rise Of The Triad didn't blow away many gamers. But you can spice it up a bit with these simple cheats. Just type "DIPSTICK," then type any of these words.

1. CHOJIN: God mode
2. JOHNWOO: Two-fisted gun-slinging
3. PLUGEM: Get an MP40
4. VANILLA: Bazooka time
5. HOTTIMES: Heat seeking missiles 'R Us
6. BOOZE: Find a drunken missile
7. BONES: Wall of flames, world of pain
8. FIREBOMB: Firebomb them all
9. SEEYA: Hands of God
10. FLYBOY: Take to the sky
11. RIDE: Missile cam
12. BOING: Bounce off everything
13. GOTO: _ any level
14. GOARCH: Hit the next level
15. LONDON: Add fog to the scenery
16. NODNOL: Turn off the fog

Let nothing stand in your way with these cheat codes for Rise Of The Triad.

Suncom's Strike Fighter line of 'sticks is modeled after the controllers in an F-15E.

Suncom Aims High

Suncom Technologies, longtime maker of mid-priced, moderate-quality joysticks, is reaching for the skies with its soon-to-be-released Strike Fighter Series of high-end joysticks.

The four 'sticks in the Strike Fighter line are modeled after the control stick in an actual F-15E Strike Eagle and range from the nonprogrammable four-button Hawk to a fully programmable 12-button monster with a pair of four-way switches. The deluxe model, called the Eagle, also comes with headphones and Domark's AV-8B Harrier Assault. Suncom's suggested retail price for the Hawk is $59.95, while the top-of-the-line Eagle will retail at $199.95.

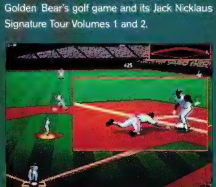
All four 'sticks are slated to arrive later this summer. Suncom says you can also expect a throttle control for true hands-on-throttle-and-stick (HOTAS) control by year's end. Mac versions of the 'sticks are in the works for release in late '95 or early '96. (Suncom; 708-647-4040; PC, $59.95-$199.95)

Finally, Activision is also about to launch Infocom Classics, collections of Infocom's old text-based interactive fiction titles on CD-ROM in five different categories. The mystery collection features favorites like Deadline and Witness, while an adventure group includes the likes of Border Zone, Cutthroats, and the popular Infidel.

Titus Software would like to cash in on the compilation craze, too. The Fox Hits CD series of seven titles features two of Titus' aging action-arcade games, such as Crazy Cars 2 & 3, Prehistorik, The Blues Brothers, and Wild Streets, for $14.99 per disc. The Box CD Fun Cube packs ten of these games on one disc for $39.95. It's a painless way to increase your game collection. Titus also plans to release a new tank simulator called Metal Combat on PC CD-ROM this fall. It will support virtual reality headsets for single-player games against the computer or as many as four players acrossa network.

If you're looking for inexpensive board, card, and word games for Windows, Expert Software has three new collections for you. Favorite Games For Windows features simple one- and two-player versions of Backgammon, Checkers, Rummy, Hearts, and the ancient dice game Yacht (Can you say Yahtzee?). Wordmongers will head for Classic Words 2 More For Windows, which has 150 themed crossword puzzles and 400 word-search puzzles about animals, presidents, television, and more. Finally, Card Game Classics offers Poker, Bridge, Cribbage, and Solitaire. The graphics won't dazzle you, but at $14.95 each, the price will.

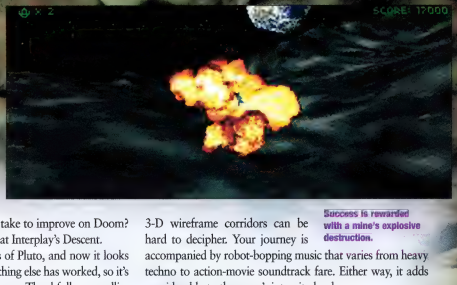
Another company becoming more environmentally conscious—it just loves recycling games—is Accolade. It has two new compilations of old games: Star Control Collection, which includes both Star Controls, Hardball 3: The Collection, which features the original baseball sim and its Stadium and Players disks, and Jack Nicklaus Golf: The Four Collection, which includes the Golden Bear's golf game and its Jack Nicklaus Signature Tour Volumes 1 and 2.



Hardball 3: The Collection, from Accolade, features the original game and its add-on disks.

Descent

By Andy Eddy



Success is rewarded with a mine's explosive destruction.

Ever wonder what it would take to improve on Doom? For an answer, take a good look at Interplay's Descent.

Aliens have invaded the mines of Pluto, and now it looks like they're headed for Earth. Nothing else has worked, so it's up to you to take out the little buggers. Thankfully, your allies have smuggled assorted weaponry into the mines, so while you start with basic lasers and a limited supply of concussion missiles, you can upgrade your arsenal with homing missiles,

These robots aren't very nice, judging by the blood on their talons.

proximity bombs, plasma cannons, and even more potent paraphernalia. Sound familiar? Descent's Doom-colored roots become even more apparent as you find yourself unearthing color-coded door keys and secret rooms tucked away in the mines' nooks and crannies.

"Hey, wave a banana that way so we can shoot!"

But Descent is different. While Doom and its ilk put you in a person's shoes, Descent sits you down at the controls of a high-tech hovercraft. And forget about gravity—there is none. As a result, up and down don't really exist. You can rotate the craft in any direction, so it's not unusual to exit a door only to find that all the signs on the walls are upside down. All this would be tough enough if you only had to worry about saving your own hide, but there are trapped miners to rescue, too. You finish each of the game's 30 increasingly difficult levels by blowing up the mine's reactor and (with some luck) successfully running for the exit.

But you'll enjoy your time inside. Descent's graphics hold you captive, forcing you to try and remember where you've been and get a grip on where you're going. Luckily, you can reach the automap with a keystroke, though the overlapping maze of 3-D wireframe corridors can be hard to decipher. Your journey is accompanied by robot-bopping music that varies from heavy techno to action-movie soundtrack fare. Either way, it adds considerably to the game's intensity level.

Descent's designers have also taken into account the diverse hardware available to PC players. The game is quite playable from the keyboard, but it's also compatible with a wide variety of joysticks and controllers, including the Logitech CyberMan and VictorMaxx's CyberMaxx VR helmet. (A Mac version of Descent is due later this year, too.)

A selection of multiplayer options helps give Descent a high replay value. As many as eight gamers can compete over a Novell network, and a good chunk of the manual is devoted to setting up and troubleshooting multiplayer games. You can even create "taunt macros," lines of scintillating text to fire off at your friendly foes—just the thing to keep office morale high. A pair of players can also play head-to-head via modem.

If there's anything to criticize about Descent, it's the lack of personality so prevalent in Doom and Wolfenstein-3D. As much as an incoming laser blast kicks you into action, the absence of a guard's yell or attack dog's bark makes for a more sterile game. Even so, Descent will turn you every which way but loose.

Descent
Interplay
800-969-4263

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA
Street Price: $39

GAME PLAY:	★★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★★
VALUE:	★★★★

Descent ascends the Doom throne with true 3-D action that'll leave you dizzy.

TIPS

- It's easy to lose your way in the mines. Shoot out monitors to mark where you've been.
- It doesn't cut into your escape window if you look at the map after you destroy the reactor.
- Slamming into a wall too hard lowers your shield value.
- You can back up faster than your enemies' fire, so use reverse when you're stuck in a tough jam.
- The color of approaching shots indicates what kind of opponent you're facing.
- Slide along walls as you move down passageways to help you find secret doors.
- Laser fire can open doors so you can check for enemies from a distance.

CHEATS

Enable the following cheats by typing "gabbagabbahey" while playing, then enter the following words for these effects:

scourge Boost weapons
mitzi Collect all the keys
racerx Toggle invulnerability
guile Turn cloaking on and off
twilight Recharge your shields
farmerjoe Warp to the next level

Look at the production quality. Look at the exciting gameplay. Look at that nifty leather vest.

THE DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER™

Better yet, look who's inside that vest – Tia Carrere (you know, *True Lies* and *Wayne's World*). Put her together with film-quality production and intense gameplay, and you have *The Daedalus Encounter*.™ A sci-fi adventure where you become entangled with a biological space organism heading for a binary star. To move the ship from its deadly course you must solve countless puzzles, navigate the ship's web of tunnels and battle aliens. It's a sci-fi adventure of epic, as well as attractive, proportions.

- Navigable QuickTime,™ over two hours of live-action, full-motion video, and 3-D rendered art and environments.
- Three CD-ROM set of arcade-style action, interrelated puzzles, exploration, mazes and shooting gameplay.

FOR PC CD-ROM FOR WINDOWS™ AND MAC CD-ROM

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ADVENTURE

The Better Dead Ratification

By Peter Olafson

A drink, a smoke, and a weird-looking guy on the TV.

Beautiful scenery abounds.

The endgame approacheth. (So soon?)

The Better Dead Ratification is an elegant CD-ROM adventure for the Macintosh and Windows that gives the artistic Muse its due, but too often neglects the player.

Developer Richard Coombes, working alone for two years, has created an eerie and beautiful tale of a grim future. Your character, a retired warrior, is summoned forward in time by a mysterious man who appears on the TV set at a bar. Once arrived, you'll fuse with a robot and use the giant spacecraft *Endeavor* as a base to collect four HoloBible nodes, unlock the strange cosmology of the game's title, and defeat the demonic Binwa leader, Mi Natas Phoule.

Things start out well. The interface that drives you through this 3-D world is point-and-click simple, and Coombes places a pleasant emphasis on good listening habits and a willingness to read.

Better Dead is also lovely to look at. Even the casual mechanics of pushing buttons, activating sculpted gadgets, and watching animations are a pleasure. Stick around long enough, and you may even spot the electronic mice. And when you die, you get the impression you're witnessing something special.

That said, the world of the actual game is quite small, and not particularly well-handled. For example, the *Endeavor* merely appears big. Most of the ship—including all of the Level 4 area listed on the elevator controls—is inaccessible. As for game play, many conversations seem designed only to give you something to click on—they don't offer meaningful options. For instance, if a character asks you, "Are you interested or not?" you'd expect to have at least two possible responses; instead, you get only a single option.

Better Dead also includes two kinds of arcade games. However, the 3-D shooting action that appears during combat sequences turns the playfield garish colors instead of showing explosion animations. The other game, in which you pilot a remote drone from a top-down perspective, allows certain enemy weapons the line of fire necessary to hit you without allowing you the same privilege—an unfair distinction, considering the difficulty of the mouse controls.

Once you get through the single occurrence of the top-down sequence, you get an inkling of just how insubstantial Better Dead is. You'd think that the game would distribute the HoloBible nodes among four different planets and four separate missions, right? Wrong. The last three nodes turn up after you complete this arcade sequence. Then it's back for the endgame at the temple where you found the first node.

Better Dead plays entirely from CD-ROM and doesn't touch your hard drive, even though it should. Instead of saving games to the hard drive, the game issues passwords when you exit the program.

Unfortunately, you can't get a password and continue to play during that session, can't save in certain locations, and can't retreat from these no-save locations to a savable spot when you discover your error. This may have the strange effect of forcing you to quit periodically to get passwords. Still, Better Dead's careful construction holds a lot of promise. It's just a shame there isn't more *there* there.

The Better Dead Ratification
ArtSector One
203-338-0192

Platform: Mac CD, Win CD
Requires: 68030, 8MB RAM, System 6.07, 13-inch color monitor
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★

Better Dead's polished appearance masks a thin core of game play.

TIPS

• Here's a walk-through for your first mission: • Agree to the terms of the creature you'll meet outside the temple. • Head straight for the closet in the lower left corner of the building. If you go anywhere else, you'll steadily lose energy. • Enter the code "666" on the console to the left of the door, and pull the lever to activate the energy grid and allow your ally to escape. He'll then radio you a code—Earth, Water, Earth, Sky—to access the HoloBible node. • Walk as far as you can to the rear of the closet, remove the lid on the jar to the right and then click on the bright spot inside to open the hidden panel. • Use the code. The data is automatically transferred back to the *Endeavor*. • When your nemesis appears, let him go through his speech and then drag the ankh-like object from your inventory and place it on top of him. He'll retreat. Head back to the relative safety of your ship. Be sure to close the airlock door behind you!

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Acclaim entertainment inc.

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ADVENTURE

No time for talk now!

Bureau 13

By John Sauer

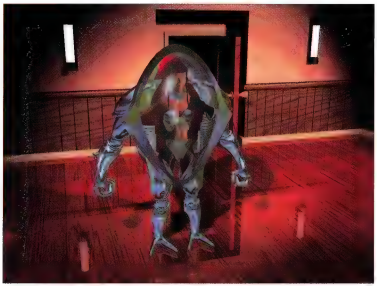
Things aren't going too well here.

A Mech warrior, a techno-nerd, a thief, a priest, a vampire, and a witch? This eccentric collection may sound a lot like the 104th Congress, but it's not. It's a group of secret agents you control in Bureau 13, a new action/adventure game by Take 2 Interactive and Gametek. They can't balance the budget, but this oddball team can provide you with the right operatives to stop something even more dangerous—a turncoat agent.

With Bureau 13, Take 2 once again follows the same formula that made its Hell a winner, but here the company falls a bit short of the mark. Bureau 13 looks and sounds fine, but it requires an uncomfortable stretch of your imagination to ferret out clues and solve puzzles. Challenging games are one thing, but Bureau 13 often crosses the line from difficulty to frustration.

You choose an agent or a pair of agents and lead them into the modern hamlet of Stratusburg in pursuit of J.P. Withers, a rogue field operative who has tried to knock off the local sheriff. Bureau 13 specializes in paranormal investigation and control—a fine line of work for folks who are definitely paranormal themselves. As you track down the elusive J.P., you discover that there's more going on in Stratusburg than meets the eye, and most of it ain't even paranormal. Underneath the cover of everyday suburban angst, Stratusburg conceals plenty of high-tech, mystical, and magical hijinks.

Each Bureau 13 character possesses a special talent, such as the vampire's ability to turn into mist, that comes in handy when you're trying to be sneaky.



Delila Littlepanther is a Mech warrior with an attitude. The silver bikini is so comfortable under a Mech suit.

Pairing up characters lets you create teams capable of working through the game's many puzzles. There are often multiple solutions to the various puzzles as well. While a strong character may succeed with force, a smarter one may win with stealth.

Bureau 13 is technically solid. The characters and backgrounds are well-drawn, and the voices seem to match the personalities of the characters. The rendered cinematic clips that appear during key parts of the game are well-modeled and animated. Even the overhead function control bar is easy to use.

But foibles in the play mechanics make the game frustrating. The title identifies usable items by changing the color of the cursor, and some items are so close together that you have to do a lot of mousing around to make the manipulation work. Click on a series of items too quickly, and you'll be deluged with a flood of irritating comments from your character. And throwing or removing items from your inventory is easier said than done.

Bureau 13 packs rewards for dedicated gamers with the patience to work through the learning curve, but casual players should think twice before opening this Bureau.

Bureau 13
Gametek
800-426-3835

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 520KB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse, double-speed CD-ROM drive, sound card
List Price: $49.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★

Bureau 13 looks good and sounds fine, but it's tough and awkward to play.

TIPS

• After you read the paper, go into the police station. Get the glue off the counter, glue the door to the fire extinguisher shut, then knock the ashtray into the garbage can. When the sergeant runs out into the street, go into the sheriff's office and turn off the power. Now go get the evidence. (Easy, huh? And that's just the first step!) • Try to pair up agents with complementary skills. The vampire and the priest make a good team, as do the hacker and the Mech warrior. • Can't get into the electronics store? Check the bricks again.

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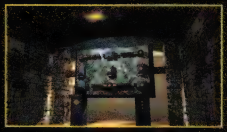

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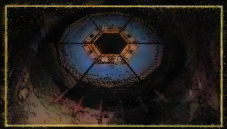
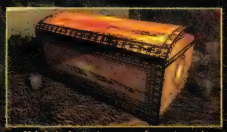


Discover hidden chambers and test your skills of logic and reason with interactive and intricate puzzles.



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ADVENTURE

Maabus

By Peter Olafson

Always go out with a clean briefing. What if you got into an accident?

Maabus looks maa-velous. From the moment it sizzles onto the screen, Microforum's three-CD-ROM Windows adventure glistens with artistry. It's beautiful, it sounds fantastic, it's seamlessly put together—and it only takes about a day to complete.

Welcome to the airstrip. Take a gander at the plane to the left, then be sure to look around some more.

Yep, this visual and sonic feast turns out to be little more than an extended snack in terms of game play. But it's a very tasty snack.

Maabus is set on a remote Pacific island that's giving off a strange form of radiation. You're called on to remote-pilot the robot sent in to investigate. That part is rather fun. Employing an easy-to-use mouse interface, you scroll from location to location in smooth first-person 3-D, following fixed paths through a range of luscious, fully rendered environments—from jungle to rock-walled canyon to a bizarre temple. (Imagine opening a crypt and finding the dead at work within.) You choose the direction you want to move, and Maabus takes you there.

On the technical side, the game uses Microsoft's WinG graphics engine and Video for Windows (included on the discs) to good effect. On our 486DX2/66 test system, there were none of the typical slow-downs associated with graphics-intensive Windows games.

But the graphics would be just Windows dressing were it not for the sound effects. Maabus' sounds help draw you into another world, beginning with the oh-so-solemn tones of the officer who briefs you in crisp full-motion video at the outset—and who appears periodically with more info. The ambient sounds are just as spectacular, from the labored whir of the robot's engine and the crunch and rip of foliage as it moves to the background jungle noises. From intro to outro, this is a class act.

Unfortunately, it isn't all that far from intro to outro. The only thing really wrong with Maabus is that there isn't nearly enough of it. This is essentially a game of exploration, with lots to look at but not that much to do. There are only a few basic puzzles and some rudimentary (and sometimes grisly) combat with the island's dinosaur-like inhabitants.

In lieu of difficulty levels, the program lets you set the game clock. The maximum time limit is two hours of game time, and a moderately industrious gamer shouldn't need more than eight or so real-time hours to finish Maabus. It wouldn't even take that long if the designers allowed saves while using the third disc. Preventing such saves seems a rather cheesy way of extending the game's life.

Still, there's no question Maabus and Microforum are on the right track. They just let you off a couple of stations too early.

Imagine wandering through this!

Maabus
Microforum
416-656-6406

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Super VGA, Sound Blaster or compatible, mouse
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

This luscious 3-D adventure is over much too soon.

CLUES

• To reach the western exit from the temple, you'll need to find the secret passage. Look for a nondescript wall with evidence of a draft. • Then again, you could simply use the robotic arm to push the lower middle block in the exit puzzle. • Be sure to collect the translator that the gatekeeper at the zoo throws to the ground. Use it to obtain a code from the apparatus at the right-hand side of the alien ship. But be quick about it: You never know when the gatekeeper may turn up to claim his property.

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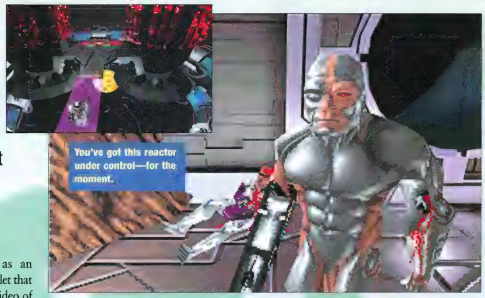
ADVENTURE

BioForge

By Christopher Lindquist



You've got this reactor under control—for the moment.

This ain't no cut scene. This is how you play.

Origin bills BioForge as an "interactive movie," but don't let that scare you. Instead of grainy video of second-rate Hollywood actors, you get first-class graphics, a compelling story, and a sense of style that will have you begging for more.

Part adventure, part fighting game, BioForge places you in the bizarre role of Experimental Unit AP-127, a man who's had both his mind and body stolen by a fanatical scientist bent on helping humanity "evolve" beyond its current bounds. Through puzzle-solving, exploration, and combat, you must discover the mystery lying deep inside the inhospitable moon that imprisons you, and hopefully discover your identity along the way.

BioForge knows how to grab your attention. From the grisly opening sequence to the explosive conclusion, the game maintains the frenetic pace of a good action movie. Puzzles are surrounded by combat sequences, and the numerous cut scenes blend seamlessly into game play. Oh, there will be slow spots as you beat your head against a seemingly insoluble puzzle, but struggle on—the reward is worth the effort.

The deranged Dr. Nastasha has some plans for you, and you're not going to like them.

The keyboard-based controls are similar to those in the Alone in the Dark series, and fans of those games will feel right at home. But this home is much more richly appointed, with wonderfully texture-mapped characters haunting graphically stunning halls. It's the details that make this game special. Explosions and blaster fire light up your screen and speakers; a sculpted "hand" acts as your mouse pointer to access the various monitors scattered about the game; multiple camera angles give you an ever-changing view; footsteps fade into the distance; and as AP-127 is injured, you become increasingly bloodied and agonized.

And you'll be injured often. Origin has created a combat system that rivals many pure fighting games, with 16 keyboard-controlled offensive and defensive moves for feet, hands—even your head. You don't have to fight everyone you meet—you can avoid some adversaries—but fisticuffs carry the day on more than one occasion. Unfortunately, BioForge slips a bit here. Lining up a punch, kick, or shot can be frustrating. And there's nothing worse than watching your crushing blow or blaster shot go whizzing past your opponent's head—just as he lands one on you.

You don't like fighting? Fine. Origin lets you select the combat difficulty level at the outset. If you'd rather think than fight, set it to "Easy," and your opponents will be pushovers. If bareknuckles brawling is in your blood, choose "Hard" and be prepared to spend a lot of time on your back.

Regardless, you'll spend a lot of time inside your head. BioForge's puzzles range from simple to dismayingly difficult, and most players can expect to be stumped for extended periods on at least a couple of them. The game also requires you to read, but don't worry—it's interesting material. Logbooks, maintenance reports, medical records—even alien temples—all contain critical information.

All of this makes BioForge an incredibly well-rounded game. It will keep both your brain and your fingers in high gear for a couple dozen hours at minimum. Get it, and see for yourself.

BioForge
Origin Systems
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/50, 8MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive
Street Price: $55–$70

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

One of the best action/adventure games around. Try it; you'll like it.

- **You don't have to fight every person or thing you see. Many can simply be avoided—which will save you a lot of energy in the long run.**
- **Try using everything that looks like a monitor, including desktops and wall screens. And keep reading! Crucial information is often found deep inside the text.**
- **On the upper level, a bouncy blaster is your best friend.**
- **Marines that never get a chance to land never get a chance to fight.**
- **If you pause for a moment after connecting with a blow, your character will try to line up properly for the next shot. But don't wait too long, or you'll be wide open to attack yourself.**
- **Beware of falling dinosaurs…or is that, falling dinosaurs beware?**

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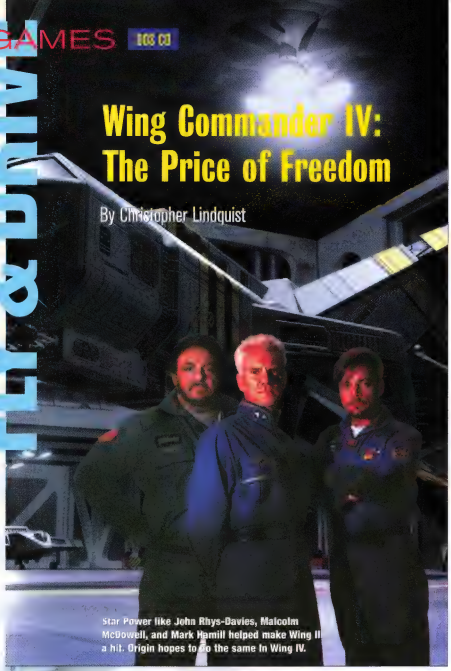
PREVIEW

Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom

By Christopher Lindquist



Star Power like John Rhys-Davies, Malcolm McDowell, and Mark Hamill helped make Wing III a hit. Origin hopes to do the same in Wing IV.

If you've been blown away by Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger, stay tuned. Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom is set to go it one better by the end of this year. While a quick glance may reveal a game that looks much the same as its predecessor, Origin plans to back up the new release with more depth than ever before.

Preliminary sketches such as these will soon become fully rendered scenes in Wing Commander IV.

Live-action video—the latest overused tool in the game maker's chest—all too often stifles game play, reducing the action to a series of multiple-choice questions. Badly done, it's more like taking the SATs than playing a game.

But Wing Commander III skillfully blends *its* live-action sequences with high-end, fast-action space simulations: The video propels the story, the shooting supplies plenty of enjoyable game play. Wing III has star power, too, featuring the talents of such well-known actors as John Rhys-Davies, Mark Hamill, and Malcolm McDowell.

Still, while Wing III is terrific, it isn't perfect. The video sequences, though entertaining, often don't have much effect on the game's overall plot, instead resulting only in minor changes in wingman morale. And the flying-and-fighting sequences, while beautifully rendered in Super VGA (if you have the hardware horsepower), lack the depth of those in such games as LucasArts' TIE Fighter. Things pretty much come down to "you and me against the universe," without much concern for overall strategy.

That's all about to change, according to Wing IV producer Chris Roberts. "With Wing IV, we're concentrating on putting together a better story and better missions," Roberts says. He hopes to create a more compelling storyline with well-developed characters that players will care about. To that end, Wing IV will feature fewer characters, giving players greater opportunity to get to know each one's

The Human/Kilrathi War is over, and we won.

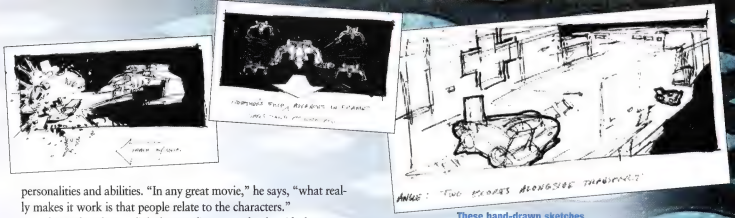
But peace is slow in coming to a universe torn by conflict for so many years. The Kilrathi may no longer pose a threat, but the inhabitants of the "border worlds" on the edge of human exploration feel snubbed by their lack of representation in the Confederation. In response, they have apparently taken to attacking Confederation ships.

Origin developers have had more practice, which bodes well for even more spectacular scenes in Wing IV.

In the next installment of Origin System's hit Wing Commander series, you, once again playing Colonel Christopher Blair, must prevent these skirmishes from deteriorating into a full-fledged civil war.

personalities and abilities. "In any great movie," he says, "what really makes it work is that people relate to the characters."

Roberts also plans to link the storyline more closely with the space-sim sections, promising that decisions made in one portion of the game will have significant effects on the other. Also, while Origin is putting quite a bit of emphasis on the live-action segments, Roberts insists that gaming will still come first. "The moment the story gets in the way of the action, you shouldn't have the story there," he says. The company also plans to add significant enhancements to Wing IV's flight-sim portions, although they won't look *much* different from those in Wing III.



These hand-drawn sketches foretell furious action to come.

For example, Wing IV's missions will have more depth. Instead of simply striking out on a flight with a single wingman, you will be part of a larger plan, flying with multiple wingmen, the ability to split squadrons to attack multiple mission objectives simultaneously, and the chance that mission goals could change mid-course. All of this is intended to present players with a variety of difficult—and plot-affecting—decisions.

The new game will also improve its terrain-creation model to deliver more spectacular planetary surfaces during ground-attack missions, more realistic textures on spacecraft, and more professional-looking video segments.

These improvements are possible partly because of Origin's greater experience working with tools that were brand-new for Wing III. There's also a more concrete reason: extra cash. Wing III filmed actors against a "green screen" and then filled in computer-generated sets, a technique that limited camera angles. That won't be an issue this time around. Wing III cost an impressive $4 million to create; Wing IV's budget will top that, with a good portion of the budget able to go towards constructing real sets, since many of the big-ticket tools developed for Wing III will be recycled for Wing IV. That expense should lead to higher production values and a more "cinematic" feel to the game.

In Wing III, video of actors was superimposed onto computer-generated sets. In Wing IV, full-scale Hollywood sets will be used.

Origin is negotiating with Wing III stars to reappear in Wing IV.

Once again, the stars will come out for Wing Commander. Talks are already in the works with all of the Wing III principals; the cast will be finalized shortly, since shooting for Wing IV is scheduled to begin in May.

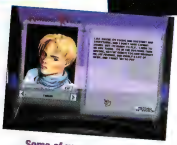
It all adds up to an early contender for your holiday wish list.

Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom
Origin Systems
800-245-4525
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: Not determined
List Price: Not determined
Release Date: November 1995

Renegade: Battle For Jacob's Star

By Al Giovetti

The TOG are out in force. Can you stop them?



Some of your wingmen are more ready than others.

Your new CO isn't to be trifled with.

Watch your wing. You'll need the help.

Attention, all space-sim fans: Now's your chance to be a Renegade.

Based on FASA's popular Renegade Legion: Interceptor game system, Renegade is the story of starfighter-to-starfighter conflict in the 67th century. And like Wing Commander, X-Wing, and others of the genre, the extraordinary skill of an individual pilot determines the outcome of a galactic war.

This time, evil Terran Overlord Government (TOG) forces are fighting the smaller Commonwealth alliance and its ally, the Renegade Legion, for control of the galaxy. You enter the scene as a hot-shot fighter jock whose last ill-advised stunt landed him in a backwater part of space known as Jacob's Star. It seems as if your talent will go to waste in this galactic hinterland until the TOG inexplicably get very interested in annexing your new post. Suddenly, you're battling the daunting power of the TOG's massive invasion force.

Renegade's characters come in both sexes and six races, and each individual has varying characteristics such as age and rank, as well as different levels of piloting and gunnery skill. You can get a sense of your comrades' personalities by looking over their personal entries in the pilot dossier and by talking with them. But unlike other space-opera flight sims, the group of nine pilots at your outpost are randomly selected from a bank of 19 candidates. You then guide them on three separate mission paths and 70 missions randomly generated by the game from the 200-plus available. The upshot? You get a unique game every time you play.

The smooth-running, fast-paced flight-sim sections play out in colorful high-resolution graphics, while hand-drawn animations enliven the conversations in the cut scenes. In addition, several beautiful cinematics advance the action at various points within the game. If you like what you see, the VCR function lets you replay mission films at your leisure.

You fly most missions as the commander, with your choice of eight types of ships, eight weapons, and as many as five wingmen. Squad members respond to orders according to their attitude and their level of fatigue and injury.

Renegade characters talk in everything from mission briefings to between-mission conversations to the space battles themselves. If you can't quite understand what's being said, you can turn on a text option. One reason you may miss the words is the music. Renegade uses a standard CD audio "redbook" soundtrack, but if you don't like what you hear, pop in your favorite CD and blast the TOG to your own tunes. In all, this top-quality space sim offers a fresh alternative to X-Wings and Kilrathi.

Renegade
Strategic Simulations
800-601-7529

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

This full-featured space combat simulator is a worthy competitor to Wing Commander and X-Wing.

CHEATS

• If you just can't seem to win, go to the Game Configuration screen and set TOG shields, weapons range and power, turning ability, and other factors as low as possible, then up the Renegade Legion factors to the max. But don't use invulnerability, no collisions, or infinite missiles, or the plot will not progress. • All game data is saved in text files with a .PLR extension. If your pilot is killed, use a text editor to change the line that reads "state dead" to "state alive." • If a mission is going badly, exit to DOS, then restart the game and choose "restore" to fly it again—with no penalty.

TIPS

• Inspect the weapons and speed of each ship carefully; armament and propulsion systems vary considerably. The Avenger has the best balance of speed and firepower. • Start firing as soon as you see an enemy ship launch a missile. You can evade only some of the missiles; the rest must be shot. • If a ship is pursuing you, turn to meet it head-on at maximum speed. Just as you pass it, push the "/" key to match its speed and drop right in behind for the kill. • Use the "Shift-W" command to send out your wingmen as soon as your ship's artificial intelligence detects enemy craft. • Never max out engine power, or you'll burn up your engine. • After the game's flight model on the Game Configuration screen to tweak the game play. Long-range weapons and ships with fast turns will feel similar to X-Wing. • Read the README.TXT file. It contains specs on four undocumented commands, including the "N" key, which speeds you to the next waypoint.

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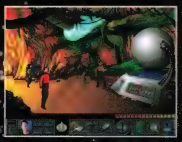

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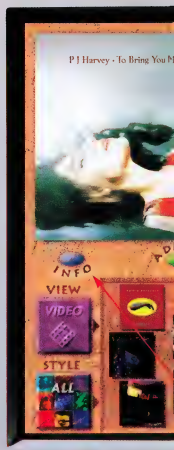

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STRATEGY

Front Lines

By Barry Brenesal

War may be hell, but this game's intro is heavenly.

The time: Mid-21st century. Global unity and an end to international strife seem on the horizon. Then renegade cartels—powerful multinational corporations equipped with their own mercenary armies—suddenly decide to battle it out in a series of world-scale revolutions. The world slips back towards chaos. It's up to you to reverse the situation.

Welcome to Front Lines. Don't let the political overtones fool you into thinking you'll make deals and trade information as you seek to undermine each cartel in turn. No, Front Lines is a straightforward, turn-based tactical warfare game. There's no diplomacy with computer-driven players or grappling with real-world economics. Within its genre, though, Front Lines is excellent.

Watch yourself, or your troops will be slag.

The Front Lines battle screen uses a traditional hex-based map, with a top-down view that employs effective unit movement animations for combat sequences. A Tactical Map occupies the left half of the screen, while a Battlefield Overview shows up in miniature in the upper right corner. A menu bar offers access to more than a dozen vital maps and reports, including the morale of all displayed units, as well as your current scenario objectives.

These tools help you move through dozens of scenarios ranging from very simple to extremely complex. Purchase your forces from a selection of 15 powerful 21st-century units, including hovertanks, blastwagons, and tech infantry with power armor. Spend your money wisely and place your acquisitions well, because your computerized opponent certainly will.

The game successfully walks the line between a hard-core war gamer's penchant for detailed "Give me 25 attack modes and 85 unit types" accuracy and a less avid player's desire for easy play, limited commands, and quick results. Units move and fight in a relatively simple and straightforward fashion, but several options let you add depth to the slugfest. Incorporate Opportunity Fire, for instance, and any unit that comes within range of an opposing unit will immediately be attacked without regard for the normal combat phase.

You can play against the computer or use a modem (or null-modem cable) to take on a human antagonist. It's easy to set up a two-player game, and you can needle your enemy with the handy chat mode. Don't neglect the point-and-click-simple Scenario Builder, either. Traditionally, these "build your own game" tools require a degree in quantum mechanics, but Front Lines' version will have you designing your own complex scenarios with multiple objectives in no time.

Front Lines also makes better use of Super VGA images and digitized sound than did previous Impressions releases. Considering the game's broad sweep and excellent design, Front Lines is one of the best war games of the year—for either grizzled veterans of countless campaigns or novices firing their first artillery round.

Front Lines
Impressions
800-545-7677

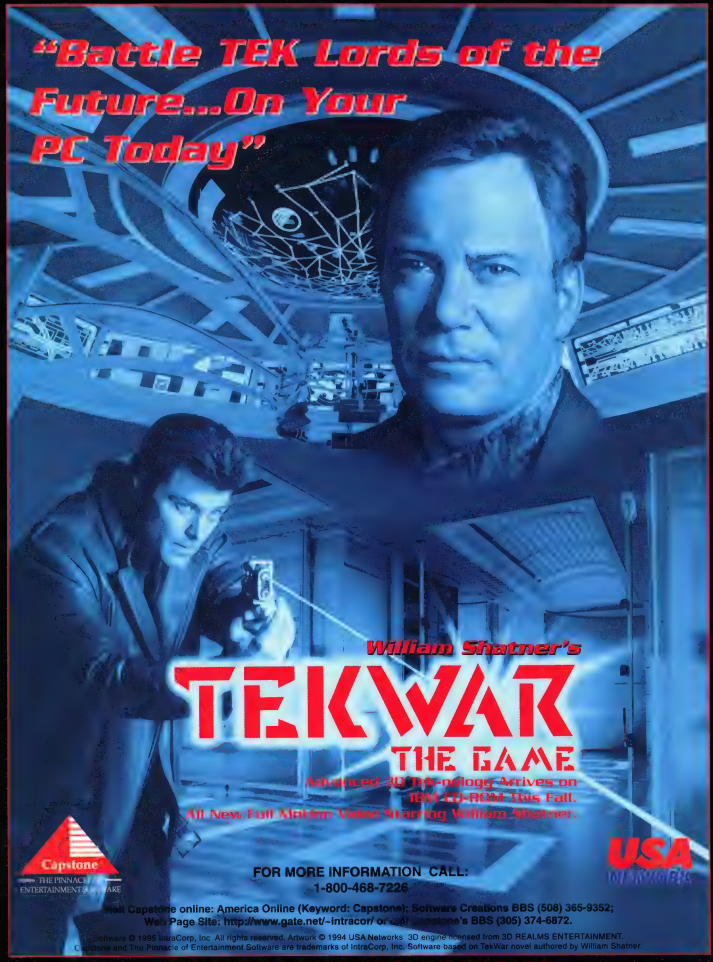
Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 386SX, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 3.31, Super VGA, mouse, sound card
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ½
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ½
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ½

A great, easy-to-play war game for novice war gamers, and a strong challenge for veterans.

TIPS

- During a battle, the field becomes strewn with cratered hexes. Avoid them: They take a long time to move through.
- Engineers are the only units that can remove enemy minefields, so protect them well.
- Some units are less affected by steep or tough terrain than others. Hovercraft usually have an easier time.
- There's no air reconnaissance, but units sighted by one enemy can be targeted by another out of visible range.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Atari 2600 Action Pak

By Christopher Lindquist

Destroy everything in your path, but don't forget to grab some fuel along the way in River Raid.

The List!

The Atari 2600 Action Pak includes 15 favorite games:

- Boxing
- Chopper Command
- Cosmic Commuter
- Crackpots
- Fishing Derby
- Freeway
- Frostbite
- Grand Prix
- H.E.R.O.
- Kaboom!
- Pitfall!
- River Raid
- Seaquest
- Sky Jinks
- Spider Fighter

Brrr!!! Frostbite is still pretty chilly.

I spent my early teens reading books, going to school, trying to understand girls—oh, and burning up untold hours playing River Raid and Chopper Command on my best friend's Atari 2600, at least until his mother ordered us out of the house.

Video games were a lot simpler then: no full-motion video, no digitized voice, no million-color high-res graphics. But we still had fun. Now you can relive those days on your computer; Activision has released the first collection in a series of its classic Atari 2600 games that you can play under Windows.

Activision has created an "Atari 2600 emulator" for Windows that lets you play the original games, complete with their limited color palettes and sometimes grating sound and music. All that's missing are those stiff old joysticks and paddle pairs.

This first Atari 2600 Action Pak revives 15 classics, including Pitfall!, Sky Jinks, Chopper Command, Freeway, Kaboom!, Boxing, and my personal favorite, River Raid. And despite their primitive graphics and sounds, the games are still fun to play, at least for someone who used to be addicted to them. Everything looks and feels just the way it should: Blocky planes zoom over pea-green race courses, the Mad Bomber grins when one of his arsenal gets past your buckets, and Pitfall Harry still gets swallowed by six-toothed alligators to the burpy strains of "dahhh-dah-dahhh-dahhh-dahhhhhhh!"

Microsoft's WinG graphics technology is included to let you play the games nearly full-screen, although WinG did have some problems with the graphics card in one of our test systems. If performance is still a problem, you can play in a tiny window or adjust the game's frame rate on the Settings screen to boost play speed or smooth out jerky movement.

This ain't no Indy Car Racing, this is Grand Prix!

You can use a joystick, mouse, or reconfigurable key commands to control movement and firing, and you can adjust the volume for the music and sound effects—or turn them off entirely. Two-player games can either share the keyboard or use another joystick. The "A" and "B" difficulty switches are even included for anyone whose skills have stayed in top shape after all these years. Activision also took the opportunity to add high-score tables so you can see if your buddy really did rack up 900,000 points in H.E.R.O. Each game comes with play tips and an online history that discusses the developers and what inspired them to create these now-legendary games.

Not everything about these games has aged well, unfortunately, especially the kludgy sound effects. After about 20 minutes of burps, grunts, and high-pitched beeps, I was reaching for the volume control.

Even so, the Pak has something for every nostalgic fan of the Atari 2600. And if you don't see the game that left you bleary-eyed and sore-thumbed, keep your fingers crossed: Activision has plans to release other games in three future Paks. If those sell well, perhaps other old-time developers will follow Activision's lead and re-release more classics.

Atari 2600 Action Pak
Activision
800-477-3650

Platform: Win CD, Windows
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, VGA, sound card
List Price: $29.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Forget the passé graphics and lame sound. This pack of classics is good for a gamer's soul.

S.T.I.P.

• **Remember, in Pitfall!, you can safely stand on an alligator's head; just avoid his jaws.** • **Max out your River Raid points while still keeping well-fueled by blowing up fuel tanks while you're refueling.** • **You don't have to catch the bombs with your top bucket in Kaboom! The bottom two will do, too.** • **Watch out for the shark in Fishing Derby! You can reel in your catch more quickly if you hit the space bar or fire button just after you hook one.**

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PUTNAM NEW MEDIA

New Levels of Doom

By Peter Olafson

Level-headed Doomers love id's great 3-D action game for its infinite expandability. But downloading extra levels from online services, bulletin boards, or the Internet can put a lot of pressure on both your hard-disk space and your phone bill.

For any Doom-lovers faced with these problems (and you know who you are), Doom-related CD-ROMs are the answer to a prayer. A bunch of new compilations pack a single disc with plenty of extra levels, editors, sounds, graphics, hacks, maps, and cheats—not to mention the various shareware versions of Doom. You don't have to spend the time and money to download them, and you don't have to store them all on your hard drive. Just remember that all four of these compilations require you to own a registered version of Doom or, in some cases, Doom II.

The personal touches make these new levels special.

D!Zone is a 900-level compilation often found in software stores, and it deserves attention. The disc's interface is a proper Doom shell (called D!) that lets you manipulate WAD files (the code that contains Doom level information) in detail, define command-line parameters, handle Deathmatches and network games, and pretty much do anything else you can imagine. One caveat: I could not access text descriptions from within the shell. (The WizardWorks Group; 612-559-5140; $39.99)

RATING: ★ ★ ★ ★

Toolkit for Doom also does a classy job. With somewhere around 500 levels, it's not as extensive as some other collections, but it also incorporates 3,500 messages from the Internet's alt.games.doom Usenet newsgroup. (Walnut Creek CD-ROM; 800-786-9907; $19.95)

RATING: ★ ★ ★

The **Dooms Day** collection's interface mimics the Doom look, and it's simple to use: Tap the first letter of the name to speed through a list of 570 levels, hit the spacebar for a description, and press Enter to launch Doom and load the level. Too bad it doesn't take after Doom's system-friendliness, as well. Dooms Day was the only compilation that didn't work on my system out of the box—memory managers are apparently verboten—and I couldn't get it to work at all until I created a boot disk. By that time, Dooms Day had wasted a good chunk of the time it might have saved. (Microforum; 416-656-6406; $15.95)

RATING: ★ ★

Tech Express has released **Doom II Mania!!! Vol. #1.** This outfit released one of the first Doom compilations (Doom Mania!!!), and this Doom II version, with 432 additional levels and a raft of level converters and utilities, is more of the same. It features a Windows-like front-end and a Doom II Control Center, used to launch the WADs, that's even more intuitive than D!. Unfortunately, there isn't much documentation for the levels, nor is there a handy way to access what documentation there is. (Tech Express; 408-259-9033; $39.95)

RATING: ★ ★ ★

Just one minor complaint: All of these compilations draw on more or less the same pool of material without much discrimination. That means the quality of individual levels can vary wildly. If you'd rather have 200 consistently great levels instead of 1,000 hit-or-miss attempts, you may be in luck; id has commissioned a range of talented freelance level designers to create new works for a compilation of its own. Look for it later this year.

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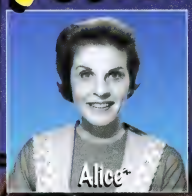

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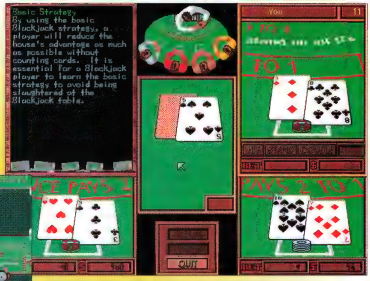
BRAIN DRAIN

Beat The House

By Fredric Paul

This house offers all the popular casino games.



Careful blackjack players who count cards will occasionally find the odds in their favor.

For serious gamblers, the casino is a metaphor for life, with money to keep score. If you want to win, you've got to know what you're doing.

Interplay's Beat The House, subtitled "The Ultimate Gaming Tutor & Simulator," can help. More than just a game, this one-diskette, few-frills program simulates blackjack, craps, roulette, slot machines, and even video poker to let you practice your skills before you risk real money. With help from "gambling guru" Avery Cardoza, it offers instruction, rules, and strategy tips for each game, as well as a coaching feature that watches your every move and gently scolds you when you make a mistake.

There is no winning strategy for slot machines.

And it's even fun to play.

Developers Park Place Productions gave the program a sense of humor, pointing out, for example, that "There is no real winning strategy for slots." The tutor also notes that "inserting coins is one of the most difficult slot skills to master" and one "that cannot be taught by a simulation…some veteran slot players recommend practicing on Coke machines or video games."

Its blackjack advice is more serious, including systems for counting cards and varying betting amounts to take advantage of changes in the odds. To help you practice, the blackjack simulator includes one–two–four–and six-deck games to handle the vagaries of counting cards in each situation. If the online instructions aren't enough, you also get Avery Cardoza's 160-page *Beat The House Companion,* with information on installing and running the program and more discussion about how to win the games. If you're playing just for fun, the game supports multiple players as well as relatively savvy computer opponents to help keep the tables hopping.

For a single-disk DOS game, Beat The House looks and sounds remarkably good. Graphics are crisp, if simple, and sound is used sparingly but effectively. The music, though, is strictly of the elevator variety—sort of like being put on hold.

However, Beat The House has been around for several years now, and has only recently been picked up by Interplay. Technology has forged ahead since the original release, and a modern CD-ROM approach could have made this a more exciting simulator and a truly effective teaching tool. Spoken instructions and full-motion video would have heightened the realism, and there's no excuse for not updating this type of game to Windows.

The trimmings may be dated, but the meat remains fresh and satisfying. Beat The House may not enable you to fulfill its title—those fancy casinos weren't built with money that players *won*—but it will help you be a smarter gambler and teach you to minimize your losses and maximize your gains. And it's more fun—and offers better odds—than playing the lottery.

Beat The House
Interplay
800-969-4263

Platform: DOS
Requires: 286, 532KB RAM, VGA
Street Price: $29

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

A useful primer before heading to Vegas—and kind of fun, too.

S.O.S.

- **Read the manual; it's almost as useful as the program.**
- **Turn on the Coach feature and then play normally. It's incredibly instructive to have your decisions criticized by a dispassionate authority. The Coach will also give you feedback on wild strategies you might have considered but were afraid to implement using real money.**
- **Turn off the music, immediately.**
- **Don't gamble more than you can afford to lose.**

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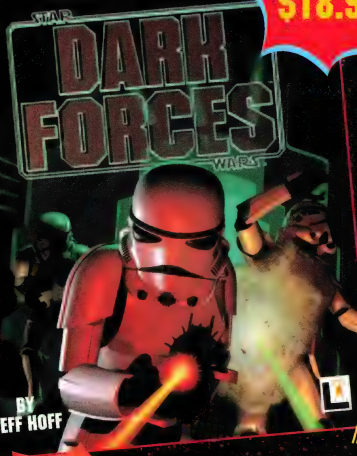

BY JEFF HOFF

IBM PC CD-ROM

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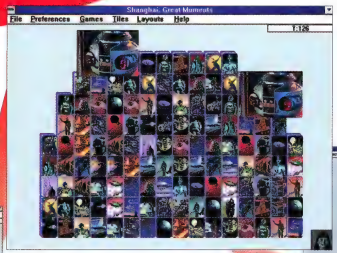
BRAIN DRAIN

Shanghai: Great Moments

By Christine Grech

Activision brings its computer version of Mahjongg into the multimedia age with Shanghai: Great Moments. The name of the game is still matching tiles, but the company has added a live-action video host, video clips, animation, and music to its renditions of the classic Chinese pastime.



Shanghai rewards you with video clips of sci-fi classics when you make a match.

Move over, Chuck Woolery: Make your own love connections with Shanghai's Romance tile set.

Choose from Classic Shanghai, The Great Wall, Beijing, or Action Shanghai.

Like the other games in Activision's series—including the original Shanghai for DOS and Mac and Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye for Windows and Mac—your goal is to clear all the tiles from the stacked board by matching pairs. You can select a tile only if it is on the top of a stack and free on at least one side. There are four matching tiles in each set, so you must pick your pairs carefully to avoid trapping tiles.

If you're new to the game, you'll be happy to be greeted by video host Rosalind Chao, star of *The Joy Luck Club*. Chao explains Shanghai basics, as well as the particulars of playing the title's four challenging and addictive variations: Classic Shanghai, Action Shanghai, Beijing, and The Great Wall.

In Classic Shanghai, you simply match tiles from a stacked board. Action Shanghai pits you against the clock while continuously adding tiles to the board, often faster than you can clear them away. Beijing uses an unstacked board and works like a classic slider puzzle; you can create pairs by moving matching tiles next to each other in addition to selecting corresponding free tiles. Finally, Great Wall puts a Tetris spin on Shanghai, with tiles that fall from upper rows as lower ones are removed. You can play any of the games in tournament or two-player head-to-head modes.

If you get stumped, you can consult Chao for general hints or have the computer point out an available match, show all possible moves, back up one move, or even start the game over. If you don't want quite that much help, you can shuffle the available tiles to create new matches. And if you're playing a game that uses a stacked board, the X-Ray Mode lets you peek at the tiles on the bottom of the stack.

Regardless of which version you play, you can choose among nine tile sets: Classic Mahjongg, Space Exploration, Sci-Fi, Romance, Art, People, Music, Events, and Inventors. The eight modern sets add themed backgrounds, music, and payoff videos and animations. In Sci-Fi, for example, the tiles bear frames of classic movie clips; match a pair to see the whole clip. The Romance and Inventors sets boost the challenge by letting you match famous couples and inventors with their creations, respectively. You may even learn a thing or two. If you're playing Classic Shanghai or Great Wall, you also have a choice among several different board layouts.

When it comes right down to it, though, it's not the multimedia bells and whistles that count, but the solid game play. In fact, once you've played through the added tile sets a few times, you'll probably turn off the video and animations so you can concentrate on the game.

Shanghai: Great Moments
Activision
800-477-3650

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, double speed CD-ROM drive, mouse, Sound Blaster or compatible
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

The multimedia extras are fun, but it's the solid game play that makes Great Moments a winner.

CHEAT

- **Don't always go for the obvious match. Plan ahead several moves and go for matches that unblock the most tiles.**
- **If all four matching tiles in a set are unblocked, remove them all to unclutter the board.**
- **In The Great Wall, concentrate on clearing the bottom row first.**
- **In Beijing, watch the cursor: It will clue you in to whether there are high-scoring sliding moves left on the board.**

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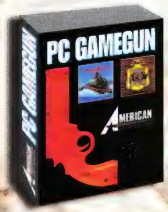

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NBA Live '95

By Fredric Paul

Shaq dunks it on Hakeem.

This adaptation of EA Sports' cartridge game wins the PC basketball championship going away. Of course, the competition is pretty scrawny. In fact, NBA Live '95 is the *only* full-scale, 5-on-5 PC-based hoop simulation around.

That said, NBA Live '95 is pretty tough. You get most of the real NBA players, complete with their stats, photos, power ratings in 16 categories, and even their signature affectations on the court. The Magic's Horace Grant sports his trademark goggles, and Dennis Rodman's hair glows an appropriate green.

Well-designed stat screens give you the 411.

The default three-quarter perspective shows about half the court at a time. It looks great, but players often run off the screen as the action goes end-to-end. A high-detail mode shows about two-thirds of the court from a bird's-eye view.

Make trades to build your own Dream Team.

The game graphics are somewhat blocky, but the terrific stat and player screens make full use of the PC. Full-color Super VGA photos and logos dress up the info with a remarkably professional look. Sound effects range from the solid thump of leather on hardwood when you make a selection to a reassuring "swish" when you score. Sneaker squeaks, cheering, and stadium noise add to the ambience.

But graphics are gravy: play determines a game's true worth. Here, NBA Live '95 delivers journeyman-level excitement. On offense, you use the keyboard, mouse, or joystick to control the player with the ball. Press one button to jump, and release it to shoot. Hit another button to pass. On defense, one button sends you skying to reject a shot, the other switches defenders.

More-cerebral hoopsters will be happy to learn that NBA Live '95 isn't just run-and-shoot playground ball. You can choose seven different offenses, from motion to isolation, or have the computer select a strategy for you. Then tell your team to crash the boards or hustle back on defense. Apply a full-court press, a half-court trap or press, or the conservative quarter-court. Exert high, low, or normal defensive pressure. At the easier levels—and until your skill level rises—you won't notice much difference between the various settings.

You can make your substitutions yourself, or let the computer handle it. The computer will also move all the players so you can concentrate on strategy. Wanna-be GMs can trade benchwarmers for superstars. Test your team in a single exhibition game, work through an entire season, or jump right to the playoffs!

NBA Live '95 is vulnerable in a couple of areas. There's no specific steal action, for example. Guard someone closely—a double-team is even better—and he might just cough up the rock, but there's no way to control it. And while the crowd roars when you score, the announcers don't. The game lacks audio play-by-play, using pop-up windows to display the score and the stats. And while you get all the teams and most of the players, a few biggies—Air Jordan, Sir Charles, and The Admiral—are absent. Other than that, though, about the only things missing from NBA Live '95 are the Laker Girls.

NBA Live '95
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486SX/33, 4MB RAM, Super VGA
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

A slam-dunk purchase for hoop fans who want to run on the PC. There is no real alternative.

S.O.S.

- **Bring lots of memory.**
- **If you don't have a joystick (or better yet, a joypad), try the mouse.**
- **As in most electronic basketball games, defense is much harder than offense. Master your "D" and you'll win the game.**
- **Watch your cross-court passes. Lazy losses get turned into layups at the other end.**
- **If you're using the computer-assist feature, it makes sense to hang back for the first three quarters, then use the boosted shooting percentage to make a late run to win the game.**
- **Turn down the game music; it doesn't affect the stadium music.**
- **Be careful using turbo mode. It's easy to run out of bounds.**
- **Stay away from the baseline under the basket. It seems to be out of bounds.**
- **Choosing Rookie, Starter, or All-Star isn't the only way to control the difficulty level. For a real challenge, play the Clippers against the Magic! Or trade to turn the paper Clips into the league powerhouse.**

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- Player animations based on real video of pro players!
- Choose one of three announcers including Hall of Famer Mel Allen!
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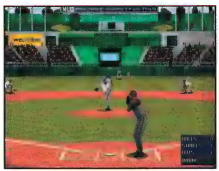

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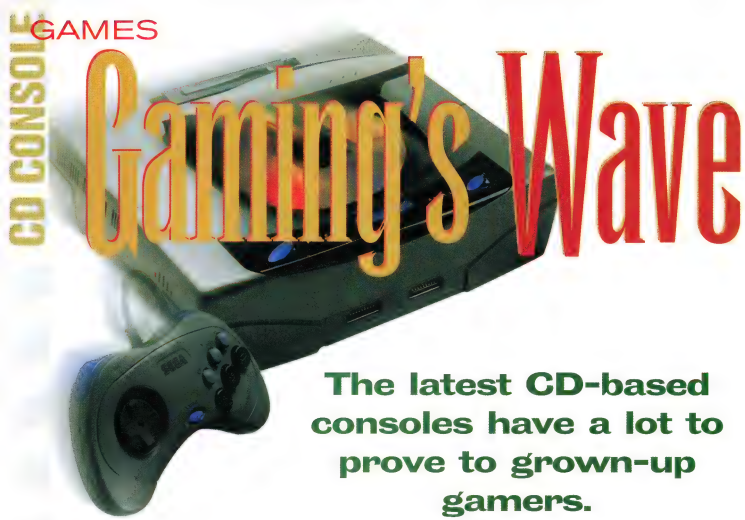
Gaming's Wave



The latest CD-based consoles have a lot to prove to grown-up gamers.

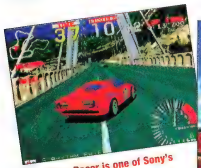
After causing tsunamis in Japan with combined sales of more than a million units, the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation are poised to invade the States this September. Should you care? Sega and Sony say, "Yes!" They swear that these new 32-bit consoles will be ideal for adults, not just video-game-crazed teenagers.

Tim Dunley, marketing manager for the Saturn at Sega of America, says the Saturn must appeal to grownups to succeed. "We have skewed the software much older," Dunley says. "If we don't reach an older market, there is no life for this system."

Chip Herman, Sony's V.P. of marketing, says, "We see a broad audience for the PlayStation, ranging anywhere from 12 to 24 years." But are these 32-bit, RISC-chipped, CD-ROM-equipped set-top boxes going to revolutionize home gaming in a way PCs can't match? And even if they do, is it worth your while to spend $400 or more on a games-only machine?

Without a doubt, both the Saturn and PlayStation are technically exceptional—more or less as powerful as an arcade machine—and their fast-action, 3-D polygon-based games *will* get your blood pumping and save arcade addicts a lot of laundry money.

To match the polygon-pushing power of the Saturn and PlayStation, you'd need to buy a $300-plus 3-D graphics accelerator board for your PC. But PCs continue to rise up the power curve, and the new game platforms are unlikely to steal the entire gaming market from computers. Plus, Macs and PCs offer an unmatched range of game and multimedia entertainment titles, access to the Internet and online amusements, and thousands of creativity and business applications.



Ridge Racer is one of Sony's first ports from the arcade.

Toh Shin Den will help Sony answer the Virtua Fighter craze.

Growing Up Fast

As always, software is the key. Sony and Sega seem to have learned from past mistakes by 3DO and Atari, which launched their hardware to great fanfare—and

of the Future?

By Bill Meyer

then took months to release more than a handful of games. Both the PlayStation and the Saturn will reportedly have some 25 titles available immediately, with 50 to 100 games available for each by the holiday season.

The lineup of early titles belie the makers' "adult-oriented" claims, however, by focusing on action games and translations of arcade hits. The initial list includes a heavy dose of 3-D fighting and racing games—Virtua Fighter and Daytona USA for the Saturn, Toh Shin Den and Ridge Racer for the PlayStation. Sports games, which traditionally appeal to gamers young and old, will also play a role, with World Wide Soccer, Pebble Beach Golf, NHL All-Star Hockey '95, and Grand Slam Baseball hitting the Saturn early. Sony is likely to counter Sega punch for punch with its own squad of sports titles. In addition, Sega's new Saturn title Bug, a Mario-like platform scroller with a slick finish, looks suspiciously teen-oriented.

More grown-up games such as Myst and SimCity will show up on these consoles eventually, but don't expect many multifaceted adventure, role-playing, or simulation titles any time soon. Even the Saturn's deceptively adventure-looking Panzer Dragoon is little more than a dressed-up shooter.

On the plus side, game developers say the new platforms provide solid ground for innovation—something they didn't say about previous cartridge systems. Very few companies took content and game-design risks in the 8- and 16-bit cartridge markets. The expense of the materials made it too costly to release a bomb; it was safer to spend money on marketing instead of innovation.

Meanwhile, the opposite situation took hold in the relatively uncontrolled PC games industry. With no licensing fees to hardware makers and a unit cost of about a buck to press a CD-ROM vs. $2.5 to $5 for a cartridge, entry costs are much lower. This environment rewarded originality, leading to such winners as King's Quest, Ultima, SimCity, Myst, Doom, and The 7th Guest—along with legions of hopeless losers.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDROLA CLARK

Software is King

Sony's Herman says, "The battle will be won by the quality and quantity of software available." That could be good news for Sega, because insiders give the technology edge to the PlayStation (see "How They Do It"). Internet buzz suggests that the PlayStation is a touch more powerful in terms of graphics horsepower. Few gamers are likely to notice the difference, however—especially in the first generation of games.

Both systems create a high ceiling under which to create games, says Greg Johnson, senior creative director at Magnet Interactive, which is working on games for both platforms: "It'll take some time for things to shake out and for developers to really watch the games and see which platform can really excel." It won't be easy to shake off the cartridge mentality, Johnson says, but adds that once this happens, Sega's established position in the video game industry may give it the edge.

The PlayStation and Saturn both may have an edge over PCs in certain kinds of arcade titles, Johnson says, especially "polygo-

Sega's Bug looks mysteriously kiddie.

Sega hopes to up the software ante with Panzer Dragoon.

How They Do It

Both the Saturn and PlayStation have some pretty hot specs. Each uses 32-bit processors and a slew of extra chips to handle specific processing needs such as texture-mapping and shading objects. It's the extra chips that really make these systems fly. The result is performance that dwarfs previous 8- and 16-bit gaming systems.

Sega Saturn

Main Processor: Twin Hitachi 32-bit, 28MHz RISC chips

Co-Processors: **VDP 1:** Can produce 200,000 texture-mapped polygons/sec. or 500,000 flat-shaded polygons/sec. The chip also supports Gouraud shading, which makes objects look rounded; texture mapping, which adds bitmapped images to polygons; and sprite scaling and rotation
VDP2: Backgrounds, scrolling images, planes and rotation; SH1 Hitachi 32-bit RISC chip CD-ROM controller

Memory: Main RAM: 2MB; Video RAM: 1.5MB; Audio RAM: .5MB

Video: Supports 32,768 simultaneous colors from a palette of 16.7 million. 320-by-224 resolution (NTSC), 720-by-576 resolution (HDTV); MPEG-1 compatible

Audio: 32 pulse-code-modulation channels, 8 FM channels; 44.1 KHz

CD-ROM: Double-speed

Controller: Eight-directional joypad with eight action buttons

Sony PlayStation

Main Processor: 32-bit, 33MHz RISC processor

Co-Processors: **Geometric Transfer Engine:** can produce 500,000 texture-mapped polygons/sec. or 1.5 million flat-shaded polygons/sec. The chip also supports Gouraud shading, which makes objects look rounded; texture mapping, which adds bitmapped images to polygons; and fog depth cueing
Graphic Processor: Supports up to 4,000 pixel sprites per 1/60 sec; simultaneous backgrounds, sprite scaling and rotation

Memory: Main RAM: 2MB; Video RAM: 1MB; Audio RAM: .5MB

Video: Supports a palette of 16.7 million colors. 256-by-224 resolution (NTSC), 640-by-480 resolution (HDTV); JPEG compatible

Audio: 24 channels; 44.1 KHz

CD-ROM: Double-speed

Controller: Four-directional joypad with ten action buttons

nal games" (with objects made up of many-sided blocks). "Some games work better with a group of guys drinking beer around a TV," Johnson says. "People like the raw simplicity: Just stick it in and play."

By the same token, immersive, cerebral games traditionally found on PCs won't get much competition from the new platforms. "The adventure stuff works really well on the PC," Johnson says, "and we'll continue to do that stuff there." This is partly because it's easier on your eyes to spend hours staring at a flicker-free Super VGA monitor than a television. And sitting close to a PC on a desktop encourages a more individual, personal experience—without the interruptions of the family room.

Plug and Pray?

If anything threatens the PC entertainment industry, it is the enemy within. Some reports indicate a return rate as high as 40 percent for PC CD-ROM titles. The proposed "plug and play" standards based on Microsoft's as-yet-unreleased Windows 95 will take a long time to bear their simple fruit. In the meantime, PC game makers constantly struggle to make their products easier to install and more likely to work on every machine—a problem the game consoles solved long ago.

Industry analyst Lee Isgur of Jefferies & Co. estimates that 10 percent to 20 percent of console buyers are frustrated PC users. They're tired of spending their lives on hold on a PC technical-support line, he says.

Steven Escanazi, principal at Alex Brown & Sons, puts it even more strongly: "The PC is a terrible platform for entertainment," he says, "You don't want to rewrite the CONFIG.SYS file every time you run a piece of entertainment software."

That may be true, but millions of gamers have proved willing to put up with almost anything from boot disks to searching for IRQs and DMAs in order to play the games they love. And the PC's expandability, both in terms of input options and power enhancements, equips it to play a wider variety of titles.

Memory-intensive games such as flight simulators, for example, are likely to remain a PC-only proposition for some time. Mike Sack, product marketing manager at Looking Glass Technologies, developer of the new Flight Unlimited, is optimistic about the advanced systems, but adds, "Those products are not shipping with enough memory for our products."

Psygnosis' Demolish 'em Derby partly shows off the PlayStation's power.

MagBall is just one of Trimark's new PlayStation titles.

Sports is a big part of Sega's game plan.

Virtua Fighter 2's graphics dwarf its predecessors'.

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Have Your Cake

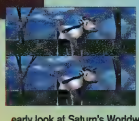
P.F. Magic's managing director John Scull predicts that if "three issues can be nailed down, then the PC can become the predominant game machine for people 25 and up." Scull's three points? Windows 95 must make PCs easier to set up and operate; peripheral makers must provide solid 3-D graphics support; and the industry must agree on an advanced joystick and gamepad controller standard.

Even now, though, the PC offers millions of technically literate users access to entertainment options that the consoles can only dream of matching. Educational multimedia titles, online services, productivity applications, the Internet, and networked multiplayer games are all available to PC owners.

"Dedicated systems don't have the wider range of capabilities," says Looking Glass's Sack. "Are you looking for something that will add value to your life or something you can play games on so you don't have to drop quarters in a slot down the block?"

Dedicated gamers who want the best of everything will have to buy one of each. If you have to choose, take a long look at what you want to do. If playing the very best action games is all you care about, skip the PC and bring home a CD-based console system; you'll save more than $1,000 and get top performance. But if you believe that there's more to games than action, more to entertainment than games, and more to life than entertainment, then you need a computer. And no amount of polygons will ever change that fact.

This demo shows what the M2 might do.



This screen shows the 32-bit consoles (top) vs. the M2 (bottom).

Meet 3DO's M2

Although Trip Hawkins' 3DO pioneered 32-bit CD-ROM gaming machines, Sony and Sega hope to roll right past the embattled company, whose hardware partners have managed to sell some 500,000 systems worldwide since the fall of '93.

But 3DO isn't about to roll over and die. Trip's minions claim that second- and third-generation 3DO titles compete easily with the first Saturn and PlayStation games. An early look at Saturn's Worldwide Soccer supports that notion, revealing few advantages over Electronic Arts' FIFA International Soccer for 3DO.

And that's merely 3DO's opening salvo. The company's secret weapon is the new 64-bit M2 3DO system and M2 Accelerator. Due out by year's end (possibly for Christmas) and juiced by a 602 PowerPC chip and ten integrated processors designed by 3DO, IBM, and Motorola, the new systems are said to be 7 to 10 times more powerful than the Saturn and PlayStation. The M2 should be able to draw 700,000 polygons per second on screen and dress them up with amazing detail. The end result, 3DO claims, will be onscreen characters that look and move like they're made out of flesh and blood, not geometry. For even more realistic action, 3DO claims the M2 system will feature built-in MPEG for full-motion video playback and expansion ports for modem-play and storage cards.

Unlike its competitors, the M2 is designed to be backward-compatible with all existing 3DO titles (expected to number about 300 by this fall). The first four M2-specific games will reportedly be ports of arcade hits, with as many as ten more M2 titles arriving within three months of the launch. 3DO hopes to price the M2 competitively with or lower than the Saturn and PlayStation, which are in the $350 to $400 price range.

Game Gallery

Both Sega and Sony have lined up long lists of games for delivery by Christmas. Arcade and sports titles dominate, but you'll also find a few strategy/adventure amusements of the type more common on PCs. Here's a sampling of the titles to come.

Saturn

1. Agile Warrior: F-111X	Virgin	Fly & Drive
2. Alone in the Dark	Interplay	Adventure
3. Black Fire	Sega	Action
4. Caesar's World of Gambling	Interplay	Strategy
5. Converse Hardcore Hoop	Virgin	Sports
6. Cyberia	Interplay	Adventure
7. Dark Stalkers	Capcom	Action
8. Daytona USA	Sega	Fly & Drive
9. Dirt Racer	Elite	Fly & Drive
10. FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	Sports
11. Grand Slam Baseball	Sega	Sports
12. Incredible Toons	Capcom	Brain Drain
13. Mortal Kombat III	Williams	Action
14. Myst	Sega	Brain Drain
15. NHL All-Star Hockey	Sega	Sports
16. Panzer Dragoon	Sega	Action
17. Pebble Beach Golf Links	Sega	Sports
18. SimCity 2000	Maxis	Simulation
19. Minnesota Fats: Pool Legend	Data East	Sports
20. Waterworld	Interplay	Adventure

PlayStation

1. AfterShock	American Technos	Action
2. Agile Warrior: F-111X	Virgin	Fly & Drive
3. Assault Rigs	Psygnosis	Action
4. Caesar's World of Gambling	Interplay	Strategy
5. Converse Hardcore Hoop	Virgin	Sports
6. Cyberia	Interplay	Adventure
7. Dark Stalkers	Capcom	Action
8. Demolish 'em Derby	Psygnosis	Fly & Drive
9. Dirt Racer	Elite	Fly & Drive
10. FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	Sports
11. Incredible Toons	Capcom	Brain Drain
12. Lemmings 3D	Psygnosis	Action
13. Mortal Kombat III	Acclaim	Action
14. PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	Sports
15. Ridge Racer	Namco	Fly & Drive
16. Shanghai Triple Threat	Activision	Brain Drain
17. The Hive	Trimark	Action
18. The Last Bounty Hunter	American Laser	Action
19. Toh Shin Den	Takara	Action
20. Virtuoso	American Technos	Adventure

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The Doom-like mystery game Killing Time is just one of the new titles from Studio 3DO for the 3DO.

The Battle Before the War

By Christine Grech

Well before the new 32-bit CD game consoles hit store shelves this fall, developers are scrambling to come up with games for them. May's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles features sneak peeks at dozens of new games for the Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation, and 3DO Multiplayer. Here's a sampling:

Data East is hedging its bets with three titles for both the PlayStation and the Saturn. Due out any time soon is **Defcon 5**, in which you play a Cyberneer installing defense systems at a space station under massive alien attack. In the fall, look for **Dark Legends**, a fighting game that features 11 warlords from ancient Chinese mythology; they clash using traditional weapons or bare hands. Last, **Minnesota Fats: Pool Legend** will arrive by year's end, bringing seven billiard games and a tribute to Minnesota Fats.

Data East's Minnesota Fats: Pool Legend for the PlayStation and Saturn features seven billiard games.

Capcom, too, is developing for both the PlayStation and Saturn. **Street Fighter: The Movie**; **Darkstalkers**, a translation of the arcade hit; **Incredible Toons**, an adventure game; and **Street Fighter Legends** will ship for both systems. But **Fox Hunt**, an interactive movie, and **Bio Hazzard**, a first-person perspective horror game, are only for the PlayStation. All the titles should ship in time for the holidays.

Capcom is developing several fighting games, including Street Fighter: The Movie, for the Saturn and PlayStation.

Konami will preview four sports games due around the turn of the year. **MLBPA Baseball** and **International Superstar Soccer 2** are for both PlayStation and Saturn; **3-D Golf** and **NBA Basketball** are PlayStation-only. Konami also has three other PlayStation/Saturn titles: **Parodius**, a pair of space-blaster arcade games; **Castlevania**, a combat game; and **Project Overkill**, a first-person-perspective shooter.

It's no surprise that Psygnosis, part of Sony's Electronic Publishing Group, is developing titles for the PlayStation. **Wipeout** pushes racing into the future, while **Krazy Ivan** is a MetalTech-like first-person-perspective shooter. By the end of the year, Psygnosis will release **Demolish 'Em Derby**, an arcade-style racing game; **G Police**, a science-fiction adventure; **Assault Rigs**, a multiplayer combat game; and **Lemmings 3D**.

Virgin Interactive Entertainment is previewing PlayStation and Saturn games due out for Christmas, including the no-nonsense hoop game **Converse Hardcore Hoop** for both systems and the helicopter-based action game **Agile Warrior: F-111X** for the PlayStation only. In other action flight news, Tetragon has **NanoWar** for the PlayStation due out in January, while Trimark Interactive will release **The Hive** and **MagBall** for the PlayStation and Saturn this fall.

Virgin's Agile Warrior: F-111X will give action-oriented flight-game fans something to pilot on both new consoles.

Finally, Sanctuary Woods plans to port **Journeyman Project: Director's Cut** from the PC to the PlayStation, and Maxis will move **SimCity 2000** to the Saturn—all in time for Christmas.

June also brings new 3DO games. Studio 3DO launches **BladeForce**, which lets you don a HeliPak Flight Suit to fight it out with a futuristic street gang on seven worlds. Alternately, check out totalitarian Bizernia, host to **Zhadnost: The People's Party**. Make like a capitalist and amass the cash in this all-video multiplayer challenge. Last stop: a haunted island mansion in **Killing Time**. Solve puzzles and fight the dead in a 3-D cross between The 7th Guest and Doom.

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Doom Clones & Battle Zones

By Peter Olafson

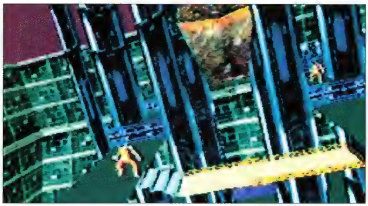
Immercenary has you climbing to the top—the hard way.

In the most sophisticated 3DO-specific game to date, the information superhighway has turned into a deadly cul-de-sac. **Immercenary** traps you in a vast cyber-city and challenges you to work your way up the mercenary ladder (you're No. 253) by wiping the floor with Nos. 1-254. But you've got to find them first, and to find them, you have to stay alive.

That isn't an easy proposition. You'll practice your survival skills in the healing sanctuaries (where you can talk to the other inhabitants), beside the lightning rods (where you recharge your powers), and in the relative seclusion of the alleys and darkness of the parks. Initial impressions of a lumbering Doom-like shooter gradually give way to a sense that you're a rogue antibody operating within a huge and intricate mechanism. The world of Immercenary grows on you slowly, but just fast enough. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; $59.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Take a 3-D action tour in PO'ed.

PO'ed takes the Doom concept and stands it on its head. This-up-and-down 3DO shooter places you in a vertically oriented environment that you negotiate both on foot and by jetpack. (It's like fighting in and around a building under construction.)

Early versions still needed a few refinements, but the basic elements of a rich and tightly wound game were already evident. And when you look down from the top of the arena, the view is breathtaking. (Any Channel; 415-424-0941; street price $60)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Virtuoso owes more to Wolfenstein-3D than to Doom. In this 3-D 3DO action game, you stand just behind the shoulder of a most unlikely hero—a long-haired, leather-jacketed rock and roller. The game's grunge soundtrack goes great with the fetching visuals, but Virtuoso seems more a compilation of stylish effects than a coordinated game design. (Elite; 408-236-3266; $59.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★

BC Racers is a lovely little prehistoric racing game for 3DO. It features various stars of cave and stream—including the pot-bellied hero, Chuck Rock—tooling around enjoyably rugged and detailed Stone Age landscapes. It's hardly Virtua Racing, but the whole experience is so airy and seamlessly executed that you'll just want to laugh with pleasure. (Core Design; 415-771-2570; price not available)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Dinopark Tycoon for 3DO adds a bit of education to the entertainment. A business sim of modest complexity—you run a dinosaur zoo—it subtly injects the school stuff via an online dino database. (You'll need to access it to do well at the game.) The music and graphics look 16-bit at best, but the game itself is a charmer. (MECC; 800-685-6322; street price $28)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Philips' masterful shooter **Chaos Control** sends you off on a 3-D rendered bug hunt, whizzing past Lady Liberty and through the concrete canyons of Manhattan. Eventually, though, it may dawn on you that you don't have full control over your craft. But who cares if the movement is scripted when the view's so unbelievably lavish? Just aim, fire, and pray. You'll need a CD-i Digital Video Cartridge to play this one, however. (Philips Media Games; 800-340-7888; $49.98)

Platform: CD-i with Digital Video Cartridge

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

P.S.: A correction from last month's column: Supreme Warrior isn't the first two-CD 3DO game. That distinction belongs to Night Trap.

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Return Fire

By Stephen P. Klett Jr.

Tank you very much.

Jeeps are small, but they're the only ones that can grab the flag.

It's ironic that Return Fire was developed by a company called Silent Software. There's certainly nothing silent about this highly addictive 3DO game.

An adaptation of Fire Power for the Amiga, Return Fire meshes strategy and arcade-style shoot-'em-up game play with such mesmerizing classical scores as "Flight of the Bumblebee." The result is a refreshing, ear-numbing experience—especially when you hook it all up to a surround sound stereo system.

Return Fire
Prolific Publishing
818-637-6060

Platform: 3DO
Requires: 3DO Multiplayer
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Return Fire is an audiophile's dream that's impressive from start to finish. But it's best played against a human opponent.

Think of Return Fire as Capture the Flag taken to the extreme. You control a limited number of tanks, helicopters, armored-support vehicles, and Jeeps (one at a time) in a quest to locate and steal your opponent's flag. To win, you must obliterate everything that stands in your way. Pacifists need not apply.

The action takes place on a series of generic, arid land masses that increase in size and complexity as you progress through the game's nine levels. You chart your path of destruction with an automap that shows the location of enemy forts, bunkers, and—when you're in two-player mode—vehicles. Getting the flag is no picnic, however. You must overcome dozens of obstacles, including a plethora of gun emplacements, mines, and swarms of "drone" helicopters armed with armor-piercing rockets. If it all gets to be a bit too much, blow off a little steam: Destroy a building or two to flush out enemy soldiers and run them down with your tank. Sadistic? Sure. Fun? Yes!

Death from above meets destruction from below in two-player mode.

The game's music, explosions, and other sound effects are stellar. Even the intro, in which the programmers take a shot (literally) at 3DO, is spectacular.

But Return Fire does have its downside. For starters, the terrain lacks variety, with each continent made up primarily of desert and palm trees. You won't see any mountains, rivers, swamps, or snow. Graphically, the game is strictly middle-of-the-road, too. Large explosions look blocky, and in the heat of battle you can't always tell the front of a tank from the back. Also, Return Fire's lack of sophisticated artificial intelligence and opposing vehicles make the game's one-player mode a pushover. Even at the highest level, you probably won't break a sweat.

To be fair, Silent Software designed Return Fire from the ground up for head-to-head play, and it really shines in this area. Against a human opponent, the game begins to resemble a chess match as players try to outwit each other in their bid for the other guy's flag.

While Return Fire's terrain may be repetitive, roving around and blowing up everything you see never seems to get boring. Solitary players may want to pass, but the two-player shenanigans make the game a must-have for more social 3DO owners.

U.S. ARMY

• Use your helicopters to search for the enemy flag first. Once you've located the flag, send in the armor to clear a path for the Jeep. • If you're taking a beating, return to your bunker to repair your vehicle. • Certain enemy structures (the ones with yellow and black loading zones) can add to your fuel and ammo supplies when you pull up next to them. • If you need to get back to base quickly, you can self-destruct your current vehicle by pressing the A, B, and C buttons simultaneously. • Keep moving to avoid enemy drones. They appear only if you stop for an extended period of time. • Don't waste your time trying to destroy the submarine. It's indestructible and very deadly. • If your enemy finds your flag, go pick it up with your Jeep before your opponent does and move it to a new location. • In two-player mode, you can often slow down your opponent by blowing up bridges that connect his base to the mainland.

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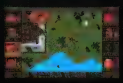

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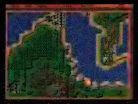

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TECH SHOP

By Christopher Lindquist

Ode to the Odd

Take a mental snapshot of a computer, and what do you see? A putty-colored box with a puny screen and a boring keyboard? Not very exciting, to say the least. But never fear! We're here to help you add some flair and funk to your less-than-personal computer.

Platinum Sound Multimedia Stereo Keyboard

converts low-frequency sounds from your games—or any other source—into visceral, gut-thumping action. Onboard controls let you adjust the stomach-churn level. An adjustable harness fits everyone from adults to kids, so your 10-year-old can hook it up to his Sega Genesis, too.

Best of all, the Interactor works. It's not quite up to William Gibson cyberpunk snuff, but it's a step in the right direction. Just don't let your spouse—or your kids—catch you wearing it. (Aura Systems; 310-643-5300; $99)

Tatung Audio Monitor

These products may go too far over the top for some people. Indeed, a single picture of you wearing an Aura Interactor Vest would probably eliminate any chance you have of winning the '96 elections. Still, these toys are guaranteed to spice up your computing life, and who couldn't use a little of that?

Aura Interactor Vest

Take a subwoofer, tie it to your back, then attach it to your sound card while you play Doom II so you can really feel the action. That's the theory behind Aura Systems Interactor Vest.

The Interactor Vest straps to your back and

Spacetec IMC Spaceball Avenger

As games become ever more 3-D, traditional joysticks and control pads become ever more obsolete. Logitech took a stab at the 3-D control market with the twitchy and hard-to-use CyberMan, but Spacetec IMC's Spaceball offers a more elegant solution.

The controller includes a rubber ball called the "PowerSensor" that controls object motion by being pulled, pushed, and twisted. Push or twist harder to move faster, or make combination moves to slide, twist, and turn your way

Tatung Audio Monitors

If you prefer your noise-makers to be a little less conspicuous, take a look at Tatung's Audio Series monitors. These displays house speakers that connect to your sound card for a surreptitious sonic experience. The speakers' sound won't make you weep with joy, but it's perfectly listenable. And audio monitors are great for people who've simply run out of desk space or would prefer to have fewer cords cluttering things up.

Best of all, these are fully functional .28 dot pitch, Super VGA monitors that support high refresh rates (up to 76Hz at 1024-by-768 resolution in the Audio 17). They come in three sizes—14-, 15-, and 17-inch. (Tatung; 800-829-2850; PC/Mac, $420 to $850)

Aura Interactor Vest

Spacetec IMC Spaceball Avenger

through your favorite game or 3-D environment. Five buttons let you access common commands right from the controller rather than having to reach for the keyboard. Several top-selling games, including Doom II, Descent, Dark Forces, and System Shock, already support the Avenger, with more Spaceball-ready titles to follow.

It's cool, but it costs. With a retail price approaching $180, only the serious need apply. (Spacetec IMC; 800-585-6548; PC, $179)

Dugan Design Flight Stand

Sure, those high-end fiberglass cockpit simulators look neat, but do you really have that much extra space in the den? Dugan Design's Flight Stand strips things down to the bare essentials and gives you an easy way to put your favorite flight stick between your legs—where it's supposed to be.

Simply mount any 'stick on top with the supplied heavy-duty hook-and-loop tape, and you're ready to go. It may not be a real F-14, but it's a lot more fun than struggling with your 'stick on the desktop. (Dugan Design; 800-962-6107; $29.99)

Chinon 3-D Entertainment System

BrainWorks Star Trek Computer Accessory Kit

You've heard of theme parties and theme parks. How about a theme PC? BrainWorks computer kits dress up your PC to fit the tone of your favorite TV shows, including *The Flintstones* and *Star Trek*.

Each kit includes diskholder, mouse pad, screen art to cover up that boring beige border, plus a keyboard and a mouse to rid your PC of the blands. Okay, okay, so they're kind of kiddie, but who cares? You don't have to hold up appearances at home. (BrainWorks; 800-999-9989; PC, $129.99)

Dugan Design Flight Stand

Chinon 3-D Entertainment System

3-D on your PC takes on new meaning with these odd goggles. Chinon's $150 3-D glasses produce 3-D images on any PC screen. They work only with titles that support 3-D viewing, but Chinon claims at least 25 such games and multimedia experiences are in the queue, with more to come. This low-priced version of existing commercial technology may not quite be real virtual reality, but it works. (Chinon; 800-441-0222; PC, $149)

Brainworks Star Trek Computer Accessory Kit

Platinum Sound Multimedia Stereo Keyboard

Looking like a mutant Casio piano, the Platinum Sound MSK-200 keyboard takes the place of your keyboard and speakers. Some features—such as the easy-to-reach volume slider, tone controls, and headphone and microphone jacks—make you want to shout "Ingenious!" Others make you just want to shout, such as the enormous size, rather tinny sound, and el-cheapo boom-box "sound level" lights that bounce to the beat.

Still, there's no denying that something unusual is going on here. And placing one of these beauties on your desk is sure to get your buddies' attention. The amount of space the keyboard takes up will also force you to find a new place to put your coffee cup. (SC & T; 800-408-4084; PC, $229.95)

By Christopher Lindquist

Bit Babble

You've seen the game-system commercials touting 32-bit over 16-bit and 64-bit over them both ("Do the Math," as Atari puts it). Hardware makers would have you believe that more bits mean more power—period. But that isn't always the case. Sure, those 16-bit Sega Genesis games look and play a lot better than those old 8-bit Atari 2600 ones, but a badly designed 64-bit processor could be a dog compared with a more efficient 32-bit processor. And the fastest 32-bit Pentium PC has trouble making Microsoft Windows play games nearly as well as a Super Nintendo. So what's the deal?

First, it pays to know what a processor does. At the most basic level, a central processing unit, or CPU, is the brain of a computer or gaming system. Most personal computers use single-chip CPUs called microprocessors, such as Intel's Pentium and Motorola's 68040. These microprocessors collect, interpret, and execute computing "instructions" for operations such as addition and subtraction. By executing millions of these instructions per second, or by passing information over to other parts of the computer—the video and sound cards, for instance—the microprocessor is able to generate the images and noises that make up the games we play.

Many dedicated gaming systems that hook up to your TV set use similar microprocessors, but in some cases they are simpler and cheaper versions of the ones found in PCs. These microprocessors, though, are usually aided by other chips dedicated to performing specific tasks.

Bit by Bit

But what exactly is the "bitness" of a microprocessor? A bit, short for "Binary digIT," is the most basic piece of information that a computer understands. Bits are the building blocks of computer speak. They're tiny switches that, when toggled on and off, become electrical pulses zipping through your system or information stored on your hard disk. If a bit is set to 1, it's on; if it's 0 (zero), it's off.

Standing alone, bits don't tell the computer much, but eight bits together make up a unit called a "byte," which can be used to represent letters, numbers and other information. One or more "bytes" can be combined into "words," which the computer uses in turn to store information in its memory. A computer or game system's CPU reads and decodes streams of these electrical words. This language allows a spreadsheet program to crunch numbers, a letter to be typed in your word processor, or images of an exploding star cruiser to appear in your favorite game.

When a company talks about a 32-bit processor, for example, they're usually referring to the number of bits (32) their chip's "internal data bus" defines as a "word" and is able to process at one time. In some cases, manufacturers may also refer to the bit size of the "address bus," the path over which the microprocessor requests information from specific memory locations, or the "external data bus," the path over which the requested data is sent to and from the processor. The address bus and the data bus can sometimes work with different numbers of bits. For example, a Pentium microprocessor has a 32-bit address bus, a 32-bit internal data bus, and a 64-bit external data bus.

Generally, processors with a larger address bus can access more memory (1MB with a 20-bit address bus; 4GB with a 32-bit address bus), while those with a larger data bus can move information around more quickly. That's not all there is to it, of course. Processor clock speed, memory caches, and other features can radically improve a processor's performance. The efficiency of the software can also influence the mix: Well-designed software will take better advantage of a processor's features to deliver maximum performance.

A Helping Hand

Many systems, particularly set-top gaming systems, boost their main processor's performance by offloading some of the work to other chips. A Pentium system with a local-bus Windows accelerator will be faster under Windows because the accelerator chip takes over the graphics processing from the CPU. Similarly, Sega's new Saturn and Sony's new PlayStation both use additional chips to help with texture mapping, background creation, and other power-hungry processes. And 3DO's as-yet-unseen M2 accelerator surrounds a hearty PowerPC microprocessor with ten additional chips to assist with all sorts of graphics and sound functions.

True Bit

Bottom line: Adding more bits doesn't guarantee better performance. While a 64-bit processor can deal with numbers in the trillions, for example, very few games have any need to twiddle with those kinds of figures. And if a game isn't actually using all those extra bits, it may actually run *slower* than it would on a 32-bit processor. Why? Because a 64-bit processor always has to request 64-bit words, whether it needs the extra bits or not, and that uses up computing resources.

Bit wars make great marketing grist for ad designers desperate to hook the potential buyer's attention. But don't take them too seriously. Any company trying to tell you that their 64-bit system has "twice the power" of a 32-bit system simply isn't telling you the whole story. And all the bits in the world won't make up for a bunch of badly designed games.

How Many Bits?

Here's the lowdown on the "bitness" of current and upcoming game systems. Of course, it doesn't mean a thing if the games can't take proper advantage of the hardware.

3DO: 32-bit
3DO M2: 32-bit
CD-i: 16-bit
Jaguar: 64-bit
Pentium: 32-bit
PlayStation: 32-bit
PowerPC: 32-bit
Saturn: 32-bit
Sega Genesis: 16-bit
Super Nintendo Entertainment System: 16-bit
Ultra64: 64-bit

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TECH SHOP

S.O.S.

Bigger video, the end of Intel upgrades, and faster modems under Windows.

Now You See It

How do video-accelerator cards really work? What's going on that lets them make video bigger? Are they really worth all the money?
Tom Rigge
Dallas, TX

Video accelerator cards, like Windows graphics accelerator cards, take some of the graphics processing load off your computer's central processor. A typical 486 can play back Windows .AVI video files at around 15 frames per second at 320-by-240 pixels of resolution, about a half of a standard 640-by-480 VGA screen. It's hardly TV quality.

The problem is that processing and displaying video requires a hefty jolt of computing bandwidth and horsepower. A 486 or Pentium can do the job somewhat adequately, but it won't have much oomph left to perform other tasks. And you probably won't be able to resize, or "scale," the video window to anything bigger without turning your video into a choppy, jerky mess.

Video-accelerator cards have special chips on them that are designed to help. These cards use such methods of enlarging video as "pixel replication," which simply plants identical pixels around the original pixels, and "interpolation," a more involved process that tries to determine what color the pixels should be to make the entire enlarged video image look its best.

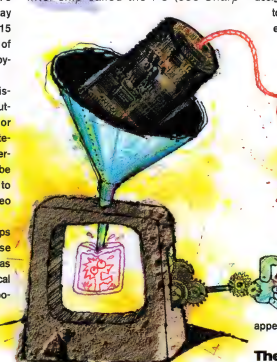
Because the card does the hard work of figuring out what color pixels to put where, the computer's CPU can do other things. As a result, some cards let you run several video windows at once or play a video while downloading files, sorting a database, playing a game, or whatever else you want without having to display a tiny video window or risking jerky motion.

Don't expect improved performance for all video, however. Some applications simply never intended for users to resize their video, so the hottest card in the world won't help. New titles and games that support Windows' Display Control Interface (DCI) will be able to take full advantage of these accelerator cards, however. And everyone seems eager to jump on the DCI bandwagon.

The best of these cards are still quite pricey—in the $500 range—but prices are expected to drop soon.

Blocked Path

I've been reading recently about a new Intel chip called the P6 (see Sharp Edge, page 10, May 1995). I just bought a Pentium, and I'm wondering if I'll be able to upgrade to the P6 when it's available. I don't want to have to buy a whole new computer.
Jill Samuels
Address withheld



Sorry, but a fairly good thing is about to come to an end. For the past few years, Intel has created chips that fit into "upgradable" motherboards. In other words, you could turn your 486 into a somewhat reasonable facsimile of a Pentium by just plugging in a new piece of pricey silicon. That will all change with the P6.

Intel's latest, fastest, most expensive microprocessor will reportedly do some pretty amazing things. It should, considering that Intel says it has twice the horsepower of a 100MHz Pentium. Unfortunately, to get that performance boost, Intel made some decisions that will render older motherboard designs obsolete. Hardware makers are going to have to completely redesign their motherboards to take advantage of the P6, and that means you won't see any "P6 Ready" Pentium systems unless Intel decides to do some fancy engineering. Your least expensive route to a new P6 will probably be a total motherboard replacement.

Don't worry too much, though. Intel is too smart to bury its Pentium money machine too quickly. The P6 chips will carry pretty hefty price tags, even by Pentium standards, and system makers will want to recoup their motherboard-design costs, so it will be a while before P6-based systems become cheap enough to appeal to even above-average consumers.

The UART of Connecting

I recently bought a V.32 modem to play Deathmatch modem games of Doom, but the guy at the store said that if I wanted to use it under Windows, I'd need to make sure that my computer had a "16550 UART." I didn't think it mattered, since Doom runs under DOS, but I'm thinking of trying some Windows Internet software. Will the modem work with my system? What's a 16550 UART, and how do I know if I have one?
Andy Meyers
Portland, OR

(Continued on page 114)

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID POWELL

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Your new modem will work under Windows on your system regardless of whether or not you have a 16550 UART. It may not work very well, but it will work.

Why, you ask? Let's start at the beginning. UART stands for Universal Asynchronous Receiver-Transmitter. A UART is a module that contains both the receiving and transmitting circuits required for serial communication. Two computers with UARTs can communicate over a wire connection, like through a phone line, for example.

The most widely used PC UART, the 16450, did a fine job for many years under DOS and with slower modems. But when Windows and high-speed modems came along, the poor little 16450 often found itself overwhelmed. It would choke—losing data, dropping connections, and angering users who wondered why their fancy new high-speed modem hung up or was flooded with CRC errors every time they tried to run Excel while downloading something in the background.

The new 16550 UART helps solve the problem in a number of ways. Probably most important, a pair of 16-byte data buffers give the 16550 someplace to store incoming and outgoing information if the computer's CPU is too busy to deal with it right away—which it often can be under Windows. The new chip also has a way to get the CPU's attention when the receiving buffer is almost full, and it supports more than twice the data rate. That's why a 16550 UART can take the heat, even with a 28.8 Kbps modem running under Windows.

Your computer vendor's tech-support line should be able to tell you what kind of UART came with your system. If you have access to online services such as CompuServe or America Online, you can search the hardware utilities forums for shareware programs such as 16550.EXE, which will tell you if you have a 16550 already installed. If not, you may be able to buy a 16550 from a computer supply store and install it in your serial card, if it uses a standard 40-pin UART socket. If not, you'll have to buy a new serial or "multi I/O" card that has 16550 UARTs. They can be purchased for less than $50 in most computer stores.

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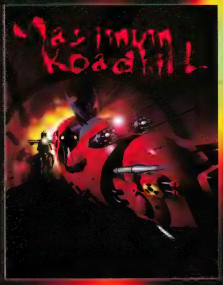

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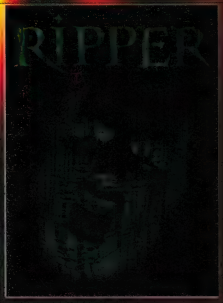

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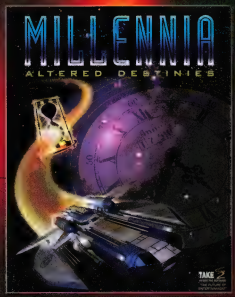

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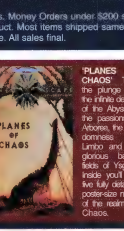

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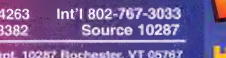

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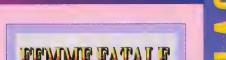

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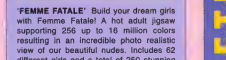

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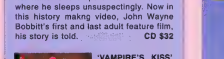

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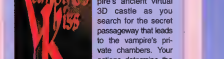

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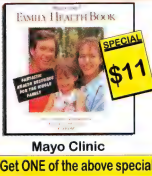

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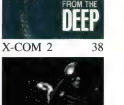

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OUR NEW VR CINEMA™ CD-ROM IS SO HOT THEY WON'T LET US SHOW IT TO YOU.

Play Intimate Possibilities and participate in our hot, loop free sex scenes...over and over without repeating! There are literally thousands of possible storylines with the exclusive company of 4 young, tight and innocent girls exposing 15 erotic tropical locations in this 2 1/2 hour VR Cinema™ interactive experience. We broke all the rules and defied most laws of physics in creating the most talked about game of 1995.

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The making of Intimate Possibilities bloopers video tape is absolutely free with every order. The hilarious, behind the scenes activities, foul-ups, bloops and blunders have been top secret and unavailable to the public...until now!

Finishing Moves

If Computer Games Were Consumer Products

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LURIAN

Random Computer Humor, DOS Division

- "640K ought to be enough for anybody." — Bill Gates, 1981
- Why doesn't DOS ever say "EXCELLENT command or file name"?
- BREAKFAST.COM Halted...Cereal Port Not Responding
- BUFFERS=20 FILES=15 2nd down, 5 yards to go!
- SENILE.COM found...Out Of Memory
- CONGRESS.SYS corrupted: Reboot Washington, D.C., (Y/N)?
- REALITY.SYS corrupted: Reboot universe? (Y/N/Q)
- Cannot find REALITY.SYS. Universe halted.

SOURCE: HEARD ON THE INTERNET

True Sports

Sports games are getting more realistic all the time, but they still seem to sidestep a few of the nuances that make sports a uniquely fascinating mirror of pop culture. Here are some special touches we'd like to see in computer sports games:

- Basketball players who refuse to play ball
- Contract holdouts
- Batters charging the mound
- Finishing moves in football games
- Knife-wielding tennis fans
- Swearing at the ump—in baseball and tennis
- Boxers who take dives
- Players let go for failing drug tests
- Spitballs
- Strikes

Hollywood Goes To Washington

The recent joint venture between Bill Gates' Microsoft and the DreamWorks SKG movie studio, founded by Steven Spielberg and friends, prompted us to wonder what the world would have been like had Gates and Spielberg teamed up years ago. Would we have thrilled to *Duel, Jaws, E.T., Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom,* and *Hook*? Or would our popcorn-scented memories instead embrace:

Duel-Speed: Driverless CD-ROM drive terrorizes the Information Superhighway.

Bob: Great yellow smiley face stalks a small New England coastal town. (Expect *Bob II, Bob 3-D,* and *Bob: The Revenge.*)

N.T.: Well-intentioned alien operating system—confused and hungry—is abandoned in a world of 4MB PCs.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom II: Indy trades in the whip for a BFG 9000 and the fedora for a flat-top.

Crook: Aging boy wonder takes on software pirate. (In "turnaround," pending antitrust decision.)

ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN, ONE BALD LEAP FOR MANKIND!

Build a Baldy Village to House Your Hairless Hoardes...

Full Motion Clay Animation Sequences-Live from Baldsville!

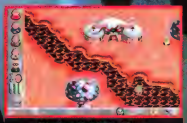
Every Baldy's Home Can Also be His Castle-If You Have Enough Resources!

100 LEVELS! NETWORK/MODEM PLAY! EXPLODING COWS! NO HAIR!

Thinking about shaving your head? Don't wig out yet; you are about to be invaded by the year's most addictive new game, BALDIES! You command an entire race of BALDIES as they fight for control of multiple mini worlds and more than 100 levels of hair-raising game play. You decide if they're builders, workers, scientists or soldiers. Need an exploding cow or another new weapon to wipe out the enemy Baldies? Invent one! Need a heliport for your castle? Build one! Features include Multiplayer Option, Advanced Enemy Artificial Intelligence, Full Motion Clay Animated Cut Scenes, Indigenous Life Forms, Realistic Weather Effects and more! Get Bald! Get BALDIES! For PC, PC CD-ROM, Macintosh and The 3DO System.

Sinister Structures and Sadistic Traps.

Arctic Levels Feature Awesome Ice Cream Architecture!



Give'em Hell Hairy! Even Beelzebub is Bald in Baldies!

BALDIES™

Developed by Creative Edge

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Get Bald! Visit your local retailer or call 1-800-GAMETEK (1-800-426-3835)

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After hearing his favorite games on a Sound Blaster, Vincent regretted the ear thing.

Inferior sound cards can drive you to some crazy ends. Sound effects built into this year's hottest new games might seem muffled and flat. Like you're only getting half the experience.

But a Sound Blaster™ sound card can spare you that insanity. You get real 16-bit, CD-quality sound that brings games to life. You hear ships explode, swords clash, tires squeal. That's why Sound Blaster is the PC sound standard.

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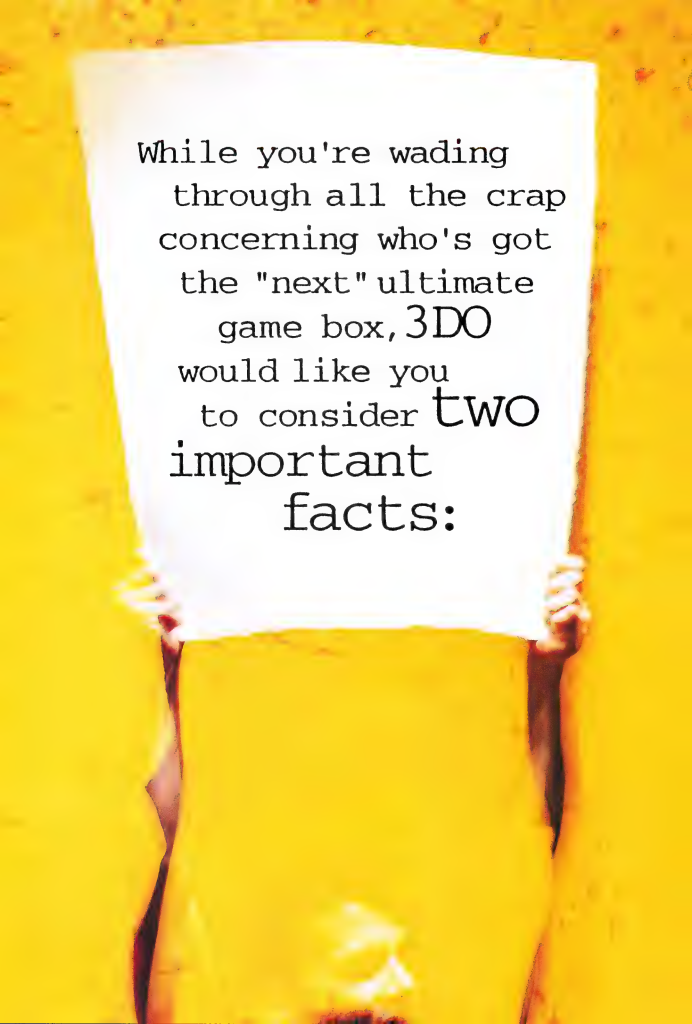
While you're wading through all the crap concerning who's got the "next" ultimate game box, 3DO would like you to consider two important facts:

WE'VE GOT THE HARDWARE.

BEST GAME SYSTEM OF 1994
MIAMI HERALD, DECEMBER 1994

BEST OVERALL GAME SYSTEM/BEST AUDIO
LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS, DECEMBER 1994

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD —1994 BEST GAME MACHINE
ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT, MARCH 1995

THE ULTIMATE SYSTEM OF CHOICE
PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, DECEMBER 1994

BEST SYSTEM OF 1994
DIE HARD GAME FAN, JANUARY 1995

#1 BEST PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TIME MAGAZINE, JANUARY 1994

BEST OF WHAT'S NEW
POPULAR SCIENCE, DECEMBER 1993

▲ **Captain Quazar™** *Studio 3DO*
A dastardly syndicate of intergalactic outlaws has brought the galaxy to its knees, and only Captain Quazar—cosmic cop extraordinaire—can stop them. Join the muscle-bound hero as he takes on galactic scum and villainy in this 3DO exclusive action/adventure.

GEX™ *Crystal Dynamics* ➤
GEX is the next generation 32-bit character—a 3D SGI-created gecko lizard with the voice and personality of HBO-comedy personality Dana Gould. The first character to have both a 3D shape and a 3D personality and only available on 3DO systems.

Wing Commander® III: Heart of the Tiger™ *ORIGIN Systems*
You direct the action, you control the plot, and you even determine the ending in the most exciting space combat epic of all time. Additional film footage and Dolby Surround sound encoding only on 3DO systems.

▲ **Star Control II™** *Cry*
The award-winning PC game, is brought to new h
3DO platform. Explore over 500 star systems pac
planets and interact with over

◄ **BrainDead 1**
Save the planet
plan of the simis
Nemoss in this
adventure featur
orchestrated dig
and breath-takin
Don't settle for l
stunning 3DO ve

◄ **Creature Shock™** *Virgin Interactive Entertainment*
Make your way carefully through the space-drifting metal carcass of the UNS Amazon on guard for dangerous alien predators. First-person adventure and interactive flight simulation enhanced for 3DO systems.

◄ **AD&D™ Slayer**
Strategic Simulation
You're a hero armed
and magic, explorin
filled with the deadl
your nightmares in t
Dungeons & Dragon
signed for play on th

John Madden Football™ *EA Sports* ➤
The best-selling football videogame ever has an all-new design for the 3DO system. Fully digitized player animations, 3D rendered field and stadium art, and CD-quality digitized sound bring out the best of the 3DO system.

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The most authentic and realistic hockey game ever created. NHL'96 is cooler than ice and it debuts this summer on 3DO systems.

Space Ace® *ReadySoft* ➤
Defeat the evil Commander Borf and rescue Kimberley in intense, non-stop 3DO action. Featuring full screen animation and crisp, powerful sound from the original laser disc arcade classic.

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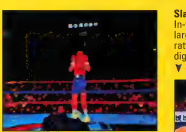

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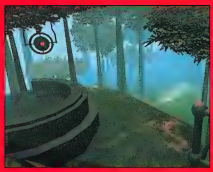
Soccer and technology collide in the most incredible sports simulation ever created. "The 3DO version will have you lifting your jaw off the floor. This is simply the best sports video game ever made." —Sports Illustrated.

▲ **World Cup Special™** *Coconuts*
Coming soon, this hot new soccer simulation inc
friendly match mode, a knockout competition mode
World Cup mode featuring teams from the Wo
games. One or two players. All new for 3DO sy

The Daedalus Encounter™
Panasonic Software
Thrill in the challenge of this 4 CD, sci-fi adventure, with over two hours of live action video and three levels of difficulty. Don't settle for less than the full 3DO version of this hot game.



MYST® *Panasonic Software*
Completely immerse yourself in a fantasy world that is broad in scope, subtle in detail, and smoothly presented on 3DO technology. Your search through this island world will so consume you that outside distractions will disappear.

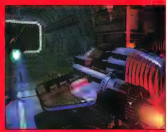
Kingdom™ the Far Reaches™ *Interplay*
An evil wizard has the Five Kingdoms in his grasp. The only hope is for Lathan, last of the Argent Kings, to recover the broken pieces of a lost amulet and defeat Torlok. The fully animated adventure of epic proportions was created for the 3DO system.

Dragon Lore™ *Mindscape*
Your father has been murdered by the evil knight. You are untried, unproven, and now you must take up the sword, shield, mace, and battle-ax to defend your homeland in this epic 3DO adventure.

Lost Eden™ *Virgin Interactive Entertainment*
On another Earth, in another time, where dinosaurs speak and the air is charged with magic, the old ways have broken down. One chance stands between Eden and extinction—you must learn the secrets of the citadels. Enhanced for 3DO systems.

D™
Panasonic Software
You take the role of our heroine Laura, trapped in a mysterious mansion full of gruesome traps and unforeseen dangers. A first-person 3D adventure on two compact discs—only available on 3DO systems.

Zhadnost: The People's Party™ *Studio 3DO*
Coming to you from the heart of recently-liberated Eastern Europe, it's a chance for you and your comrades to compete head-to-head to win cold, hard, capitalist cash. Roaringly funny and a great party game. Only available for 3DO systems.



Phoenix 3™ *Studio 3DO*
Galearth is under attack by alien invaders—but all planetary defenses were dismantled centuries ago. You must locate pilots, find hidden ships from millenia past, and counterattack to save your planet. This action/adventure is only available for 3DO systems.

Panzer General™ *Strategic Simulations Inc.*
After blowing the critics away, this award-winning strategy mega-hit invades the 3DO platform. In addition to the campaign game, you can play over 35 progressive scenarios independently as either the Allied or Axis side.

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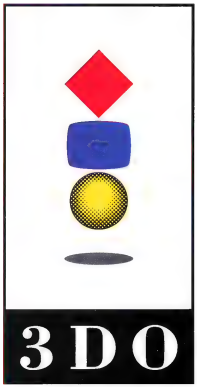
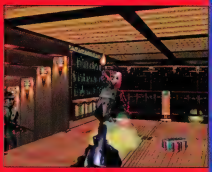


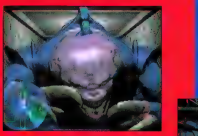
Cyberia™ *Interplay*
In the year 2027, a long-lost piece of Soviet technology becomes the ultimate doomsday device in this action/adventure on the cutting edge of video gaming. Music and sound effects by Thomas Dolby's Headspace.

The 11th Hour: The sequel to 7th Guest™
Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Twelve times the size of its highly acclaimed predecessor, and much more terrifying. Play the best version on your 3DO system.

Killing Time™
Studio 3DO
You are trapped in a horrifying first-person passage through unspeakable evils in a 3D world. Step through crooked hallways, speak to the video-real shades of past residents, and kill or be killed as you solve the mystery of Matimicus Isle. A 3DO exclusive.



Alone in the Dark II™ *Interplay*
The bigger, better, faster sequel to the award-winning *Alone in the Dark*. Enjoy the finest version on your 3DO system.



Space Hulk™ *Electronic Arts®*
The bloody alien vs. space marine battle continues in a first-person perspective strategic assault. All new version only available for 3DO systems.

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WE GOT IT. THEY DON'T.

Flying Nightmares™ *Domark Software*
Based on the elite "Flying Nightmares" Marine Harrier squadron, this game really pushes the envelope of CD technology. Fly the finest combat flight simulator on any platform.

Road & Track® Presents The Need for Speed™ *Electronic Arts®*
Road & Track, the premier automotive enthusiast magazine, and Electronic Arts bring you the most advanced racing simulator ever for 32-bit CD-ROM players. Revolutionary 3D graphics, Dolby Surround sound, and a painstakingly accurate physics model.

Star Wars® Rebel Assault™ *LucasArts Entertainment*
Take control of any of four Star Wars vehicles in a variety of challenging piloting, targeting and combat scenarios in the first LucasArts game made exclusively for CD-ROM.

Road Rash™ *Electronic Arts®*
You knew it as the #1 racing/combat series for 16-bit, but you haven't seen *Road Rash* until you've played the award-winning 3DO version—packed with music and videos featuring A&M Records' hottest alternative bands.

Shock Wave™: Invasion Earth 2019
Electronic Arts®
The most intense 360° 3D flying combat action ever seen—only on the 3DO system. Use futuristic weaponry to defend Earth's cities from the alien menace.

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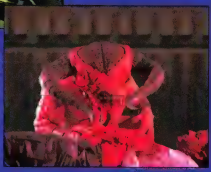
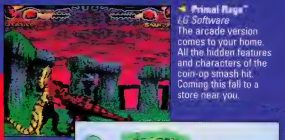
imagine
fighter in
and cult
it's real.
3DO sys

PO'ed *Any Channel*
PO'ed submerges you in a fully-rendered 3D world and presents over 40 levels of the most exciting, realistic and intriguing first person gaming experience ever available—only on 3DO systems.

BladeForce™ *Studio 3DO*
Match your 3D flying skills, weapon proficiency, and cunning against the evil crime lords of futuristic 3D cities. Your experimental HellPak fight suit gives you complete 360° freedom of movement, and it only runs on 3DO systems.



DOOM™ *Art Data Interactive*
The 3DO version features new never-before-seen levels, enhanced graphics resolution, and full spectrum stereo audio. So load up the rocket launchers and break out the radiation suits because this is the hottest version of DOOM you'll ever see.



Primal Rage™ *LG Software*
The arcade version comes to your home. All the hidden features and characters of the coin-op smash hit. Coming this fall to a store near you.

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller™ *GameTek*
Hellspawn meets high technology in this instantly classic cyberpunk thriller starring Dennis Hopper, supermodel Stephanie Seymore, Grace Jones and Geoffrey Holder. The best version is the 3DO version.

BattleSport™ *Studio 3DO*
3D-ton battletanks go one-on-one in the most ruthless 3D arena combat sport since the Roman gladiators. Bring a bristling array of high-tech weaponry to bear against the league's vicious competitors, or take on a friend in a personal grudge match. Only on 3DO systems.

on Man *Virgin Interactive Entertainment*
idely hailed as the most true-to-life-movie interactive video game experience ever. ing Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo®
Panasonic Software
Experience the ultimate arcade action…in your home! This is the latest and hottest version — only available in finer arcades, and on your 3DO system.

Return Fire™ *Prolific Publishing*
Launch your helicopter, armored support vehicle, tank or jeep to destroy your opponent and capture his flag in this award-winning 3DO exclusive. One or two players.

Samurai Shodown™ *Crystal Dynamics*
All the carnage-intensive graphics of the original arcade *Samurai Shodown*, including the freakin' blood. All the brutal game-play. All the weapons. All the fun. Hack away on a 3DO system.

Ballz™ *Panasonic Software*
"The Director's Cut"—not for the faint-hearted and only available on 3DO systems. *Ballz* is the outrageous brawl-for-all that takes fighting games to a whole new dimension! Unparalleled control lets you pummel and mortify your opponents in true 3D combat.

ence Warrior™ *Digital Pictures*
you are a kung-fu street
a world ruled by evil warlords
masters—except this time…
100% real video and best on
eens.

To find these or any of the more than **200** titles (That's right. Two with two zeros. Two times one hundred. Any way you slice it, more than they got.) available on the 3DO system, see your favorite retailer. Or to order direct, call **1-800-336-3506.** OR, for more information about 3DO products, look us up on the Web: www.3do.com

We've got the most advanced gaming system on the planet.

We've got over 200 woody-inducing titles to play on it.

We've got industry awards coming out our wazoo.

And you know what? It's all here. Right now. Not next month. Not "coming this fall."

We Got It. They Don't.

It's as simple as that.

Go out and get it.

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Make your way carefully through the space-drifting metal carcass of the UNS Amazon on guard for dangerous alien predators. First-person adventure and interactive flight simulation enhanced for 3DO systems.

AD&D® Slayer™ *Strategic Simulations Inc.*
You're a hero armed with weapons and magic, exploring dungeons filled with the deadly monsters of your nightmares in this Advanced Dungeons & Dragons game designed for play on the 3DO system.

Space Ace™ *ReadySoft*
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Your father has been murdered by the evil knight. You are untried, untrusted, and now you must take up the sword, shield, mace, and battle-ax to defend your homeland in this epic 3DO adventure.

Lost Eden™ *Virgin Interactive Entertainment*
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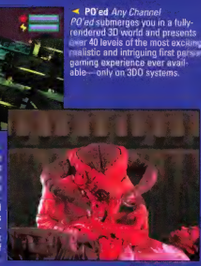

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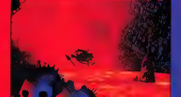

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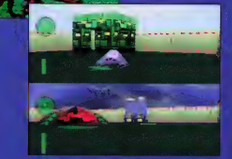

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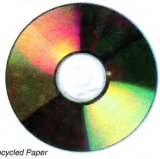

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